
**THE CULTURAL UNITY
OF
BLACK AFRICA**

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cheikh Anta Diop was born in Senegal in December 1923 and died of a heart attack in February 1986. His entire life was devoted to scholarship and to retrieving ancient Egyptian history as an intrinsic part of Black African history. He was a lone voice in a sea of opposition. His early education was at Muslim schools and he later obtained the baccalaureat in Senegal before going to Paris to study mathematics. While at the Sorbonne, Diop also took courses in sociology, anthropology, ancient history, prehistory and linguistics under French scholars André Aymard, Gaston Bachelard, André Leroi-Gourhan, Marcel Griaule and Lille Homburger. Diop also studied hieroglyphics, Egyptology and nuclear physics, and was granted his Docteur es Lettres, after much controversial debate, in 1960. Diop was responsible for the UNESCO-sponsored conference on the peopling of ancient Egypt and the deciphering of the Meroitic script in Cairo, 1974, and was a vice-president of the UNESCO committee responsible for the *General History of Africa*. Diop participated in the political life of Senegal and was subjected to house arrest and the confiscation of his passport by the Senghor regime. He founded the radio-carbon laboratory at the University of Dakar in 1966, and since his death the university has been renamed in his honour. In 1966, at the world festival of Black arts in Senegal, Diop, along with W.E.B. DuBois, was voted the most influential scholar of the 20th century on the black world.

Diop is survived by a wife and three sons.

CHEIKH ANTA DIOP

**THE CULTURAL UNITY
OF
BLACK AFRICA**

**THE DOMAINS of PATRIARCHY
AND of MATRIARCHY
IN CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY**



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The Cultural Unity of Black Africa
The Domains of Patriarchy and of Matriarchy
in Classical Antiquity
by Cheikh Anta Diop

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INTRODUCTION

Cheikh Anta Diop's theory of Matriarchal values as the basis for African Cultural Unity

Ifi Amadiume

It was in 1983 that I nearly met Cheikh Anta Diop in a sufi community in Madina-Kaolack in Senegal. The Imam and Shaikh of that community, knowing my political and intellectual interests, said to me as soon as I arrived there that I had just missed Cheikh Anta Diop. Then again in 1985, I found myself standing right before the great African savant. The organiser of that 1985 conference, the very first time Cheikh Anta Diop delivered a paper in London, knowing how the news would affect me, urged me to meet him. Even though very pregnant at the time, I leapt up and went to him. I made as if to talk to him. He stretched out his hand in returned salutation, when someone came between us and started talking to him. I let it be and returned to my seat.

Later in 1985, I wrote *Afrikan Matriarchal Foundations: The Igbo Case*¹ in which I tried to substantiate some of the ideas raised by Diop in *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa: The Domains of Patriarchy and of Matriarchy in Classical Antiquity*². I dedicated the book to Diop with the Igbo eulogy, *Ebunu ji isi eje ogu*, 'brave ram who fights with his head'. Of course I meant fighting fearlessly with both courage and intellect; what Diop himself called 'rationalization'. Then in 1986, I read without warning in a Nigerian newspaper that our great philosopher had died of a heart attack and I wept. He was only 62 years old. By being invited to write an introduction to the Karnak House edition of *The Cultural Unity of Black Africa*, I find myself again on the path that Cheikh Anta Diop threaded. Hopefully, I shall not be lost in blind adulation, but will assess objectively the merits of this book, not so much as an ammunition for fighting the racisms

against Africa, but its relevance in contemporary African political thinking and for the development of a more progressive class and gender-aware African studies programme.

Diop wrote this book during the 1950s nationalist struggles and general debate for African independence. As a foremost pan-Africanist, he attacked those who could not conceive the idea of an independent African federation or a multi-national African state. He therefore undertook to demonstrate 'our organic cultural unity' in spite of a 'deceptive appearance of cultural heterogeneity'. Why did Diop adopt this organic approach? One reason could be the fact that that was the period of the organic approach (the concept of the homogeneity of a specific society which precludes social contradictions) followed by the formalists in the social sciences. This approach was later discredited by the functionalists and the structuralists. Yet, Diop's work makes better sense in the structuralist school, as he is basically dealing with ideas. The other reason could be that in this particular issue, Diop was not simply concerned with pure abstract armchair academics, but had a political commitment to his people to try and reconstruct a history and culture, which had been subjected to nearly 900 years of plunder by both the Arabs and the Europeans. This does not even include the destruction of the ancient African Egyptian civilization. Diop therefore argued that that which unites us is much more fundamental than our superficial differences, and that these differences are externally imposed. They derive from colonial heritage.

What Diop took firm grip on and used to argue the 'profound cultural unity' of Africa is the history of African matriarchy. He thus proceeded from analysis of material conditions to ideological superstructures. By so doing, Diop reclaimed our Afrocentric history, applying both an holistic account and a structural analysis of myth in order to expose the ideas behind events. The result is a blueprint for a comprehensive African social history.

The racist, colonialist and imperialist forces that Diop was confronting at the time compelled him not to dwell solely on an account and analysis of matriarchy in Africa. He had to confront the so-called world 'experts' on the subject. Diop thus proceeded to do an extensive and devastating critique of Bachofen's theory of matriarchy and Morgan's theory of the family.

The evolutionist matriarchy theory of Bachofen was based on the analysis of classical Greek literature. From this limited Greek source, he proceeded to generalise for the whole of human social organisation the evolution of a period when there was no marriage but 'barbarism' and 'sexual promiscuity' based on a matrilineal descent system to a period of marriage and matriarchy based on the supremacy of the woman. The final stage was the period of masculine imperialism, that is, patriarchy. As Diop points out, Bachofen did not stop at fabricating these evolutionary periods, but also imposed a prejudiced judgement, concluding that patriarchy is superior to matriarchy.

Even so, what is interesting in Bachofen's analysis of the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus is not so much the defeat of matriarchy by patriarchy, but the fact that in order for patriarchy to make these false claims of either defeat or superiority, it had to invent a kind of pseudo-procreation in abstract rituals or religions and appropriate the basic factual procreative role of natural biological motherhood and that 'closest bond of love'. This is basically what the roles of priesthood and imamate have done. In these roles men assume the nurturing roles of the mother; they even go to the extent of imitating women's wear. In patriarchal rituals in which this construct is more overt we see men dressed as women. This is why real women are banned from these roles. This was the role of Apollo and Athena. Also, in order for this pseudo-construct to succeed, there must be re-classified collaborating women like Athena. Once we can grasp this analysis, then we need not go to antiquity to see this struggle or contest between matriarchal and patriarchal thought systems. Many present-day feminist theorists are also unable to handle the issue of matriarchy, as they are still bogged down by Bachofen's periodisation. Or perhaps, because they have neither historical nor cultural memory of matriarchy, they understand matriarchy, not so much in the sense of social institutions, kinship organisations, women's institutions and culture, but as a society totally ruled by women. When they cannot find such a society, they dismiss the issue of matriarchy as myth.

Diop illustrates how Morgan's understanding of marriage and kinship systems remained chaotic. From the study of the Iroquois Indians of North America, Morgan had, based on his ethnocentric concepts of the nuclear family structure of European civilization,

postulated four stages in the evolution of marriage and the family from primitive 'promiscuous intercourse'. He therefore distinguished matrilineality and matriarchy of 'barbarian' peoples from the patriarchy and monogamy of 'civilised' Greece and Rome. As Diop shows, Morgan's classification was basically this equation: Aryan (Indo-European) = white = civilized and non-Aryan = others = savages. Morgan was a racist. This theory was racist.

In their theories of a universal organic matriarchy, both Bachofen and Morgan established a false and racist hierarchy of social systems and values. The colonial subject of anthropology reinforced this division and racism as a result of its zoning of humanity into its so-called primitive societies = others, and modern = theirs = civilized societies. These racist and ignorant notions of high and low cultural civilizations equated feudal, pyramidal, bureaucratic and imperialistic political systems with 'high' culture and decentralised and diffused political systems with 'low' and primitive culture. How today's political awareness seeks to reverse this fallacy, is marked by the movements for horizontal communication and decentralisation.

Diop's position is that matriarchy is specific, not general, given the influence of ecology on social systems. He therefore put forward his hypothesis of a double cradle and went ahead to argue two geographical zones of North and South. His thesis is that matriarchy originated in the agricultural South, using Africa to illustrate his argument, while patriarchy originated in the North, being nomadic. The middle belt was the Mediterranean basin, where matriarchy preceded patriarchy. Whereas in Western Asia, both systems were superimposed on each other.

Comparing these North and South cultures on the basis of the status of women, systems of inheritance, dowry and kinship affiliation, Diop shows how the Northern Indo-European cultures denied women rights and subjugated them under the private institution of the patriarchal family, as was argued by Engels. The Northern patriarchs had women under their armpit, confining them to the home and denying them a public rôle and power. In this system, a husband or father had the right of life and death over a woman. The travelling out of women for marriage compounded this patriarchal control. This Northern system was characterised by dowry, fire-worship and cremation.

In contrast, in the matriarchal culture of the South, typified by

the agricultural system and burial system, husbands came to wives. Wives were mistresses of the house and keepers of the food. Woman was the agriculturalist. Man was the hunter. Woman's power was based on her important economic role. This system was also characterised by bridewealth and the strong tie between brother and sister. Even in the marriage, where a woman travelled out, this bond was not completely severed. Most of the funeral rules prescribed the return of a wife's corpse to her natal home. Funeral exchanges also indicated compensation for the loss of a woman, as my own researches confirmed.

This Southern matriarchal system was also marked by the sacredness of the mother and her unlimited authority. There were oaths invoking the power of the mother, that is, the ritualisation of that matricentric, mother and child, 'closest bond of love' quoted even in *Eumenides*. This is the 'spirit of common motherhood', generally symbolised in African religions. In Igbo, it is *Oma*, *Umunne*, *Ibenne*. In this African religious concept, it is the mother that gives her children and society in general the gift of 'the pot of prosperity', which in Igbo is called *ite uba*.

The mother also gives the pot of secrets/mystery/magic/sacred knowledge/spiritual power. In Igbo, this is called *ite ogwu*. In Wolof, it is *demm*. All the unadulterated African myths, legends and stories of heroism attest to this. As Diop says, these ideas 'go back to the very earliest days of African mentality. They are thus archaic and constitute, at the present time, a sort of fossilization in the field of current ideas. They form a whole which cannot be considered as the logical continuation of a previous and more primitive state, where a matrilineal heritage would have ruled exclusively'. (p.34) The social or cultural construction of fatherhood in these matriarchal systems led prejudiced and ignorant social anthropologists to assume that our societies did not know the facts of conception!

Diop's theory is that these two systems are irreducible, 'it has been shown that these things still occur under our own eyes, in both cradles and with full knowledge of the facts. It is not therefore logical to imagine a qualitative leap which would explain the transition from one to the other'. (p.41) Diop therefore insisted on attributing social change primarily to external factors, as a result of his organic view of society. This organic understanding of society and culture contributed to his attribution of the mixed systems of the Oceanic societies to the role of migration and dispersion.

This attribution of social change to external factors alone presents not only an organic but a static view of society. Diop saw aboriginal Africa as the continent where ancient civilizations have remained preserved, since Africa seemed more substantially resistant to external factors. Thus, Diop was able to present two polar systems of values for his North and South cradles. Africa, as representative of the Southern cradle of matriarchy, valued the matriarchal family, territorial state, the emancipation of women in domestic life, the ideal of peace and justice, goodness and optimism. Its favoured literatures were novels, tales, fables and comedy. Its moral ethic was based on social collectivism.

The contrasting Northern cradles, as exemplified by the culture of Aryan Greece and Rome, valued the patriarchal family, the city-state, moral and material solitude. Its literature was characterized by tragedy, ideals of war, violence, crime and conquests. Guilt and original sin, pessimism, all pervaded its moral ethic which was based on individualism.

Diop, having thus contrasted one system with the other, went on to provide a general history of both cradles and their areas of influence. In order to prove his point that African women were already Queens and warriors, participating in public life and politics, while their Indo-European contemporaries were still subordinated and subjugated under the patriarchal family, Diop presents us with an array of powerful ancient African Queens and their achievements. In Ethiopia, there were Queen of Sheba, Queen Candace, who fought the invading army of Augustus Caesar. In Egypt, there was Queen Hatshepsut, described as 'the first queen in the history of humanity'. Cleopatra was titled 'Queen of Kings'. Even in the huge and powerful empires of Ghana in the Third Century A.D., matriarchal values were the norm. It was the same in the Mali empire.

Consistent with his theory of the external factor in social change, Diop attributes the introduction of patrilineality in Africa to the coming of Islam in the tenth century. Even then, he argues that patrilineality was on the surface and did not penetrate deep into the basic matriarchal systems. He attributes the more recent changes towards patriarchy to more external factors such as Islam, Christianity and the secular presence of Europe in Africa, symbolised by colonial legislation, land rights, naming after the father, monogamy and the

class of Western educated elites and moral contact with the West.

Diop's theory of two irreducible systems seem to me difficult to accept academically, given the limitations imposed on the organic approach to societies which leads to the portrayal of society as static rather than dynamic in itself. I do however accept the irreducibility of the matricentric unit as a social fact. Patriarchy can only be based on a denial of this fact, hence its falsifications and fabrications. Patriarchy is both a social and cultural construct, consequently the equation of patriarchy with the control and oppression of women. The 'natural' and social fact of the matricentric unit is basic to all societies, as symbolised by the pregnant woman. Consequently, the question is whether this basic structure of mother and child is acknowledged in social organisation, culture and politics. Where it is acknowledged, women would obviously be so organised to safeguard that acknowledgement. For all we know, women were that organised in indigenous African societies. Igbo women, for example, still sing, 'woman is principal, is principal, is principal', repeating and repeating the statement and message. So too is the sacredness and infallibility of mothers sung repeatedly – by women. African women were that socio-economically organised that they were involved in and in control of certain areas in the ideology-making processes.

It is therefore necessary to apply a multiplicity of theoretical approaches in order to gain insight into the internal dimensions of social and gender relations. It would be necessary to apply social process, conflict and dissent theories, in order to gain a much fuller picture of societies and cultures, not just a given and unchanging organic concept of so-called formal systems. Men and women are rational animals, who are able to form political and conflicting interest groups on the basis of sex, age, class, etc., differences or similarities. Even the individual can be in conflict with the institution as is argued by difference/different deconstructionists.

This is why I took a different position in *Afrikan Matriarchal Foundations* and argued that at all times in human history, matriarchal and patriarchal principles of social organisation or ideologies have presented two juxtaposed and contesting systems. For example, if these queens listed by Diop were functioning in solely matriarchal systems, one wonders why they had to wear men's symbols of authority, like Nzinga of Angola who dressed in men's clothes, or

Hatshepsout in Egypt who wore a beard. The masculinism of most of these warrior queens has earned them such descriptions as iron maidens and Boadiceas³.

It can however be argued that as a result of the basic matriarchal differences in social values, centralisation and feudalism in Africa would throw up 'Queen Bees', sitting comfortably on their female selves, while Indo-European patriarchal values and centralisation would produce the Boadiceas and iron maidens, generally alienated from their female selves. In the traditional African decentralised political systems, the symbolic representation of the goddesses was simply in titled women, who were neither 'Queen Bees' nor iron maidens, as for example, Igo *Ekwe* titled women⁴.

This debate was also taken on by Diop, when he deconstructed the classical Amazon myth, showing how it was derived from an Eurasian cradle, where 'a ferocious patriarchy reigned'. It is the patriarchal malice against women, fabricated in the classical Amazon myth, which led Diop to make this statement: 'Matriarchy is not an absolute and cynical triumph of woman over man; it is a harmonious dualism, an association accepted by both sexes, the better to build a sedentary society where each and everyone could fully develop by following the activity best suited to his physiological nature. A matriarchal regime, far from being imposed on man by circumstances independent of his will, is accepted and defended by him'. (p.108)

As Diop says correctly of militant or military female contingents in Africa, 'the hatred of men is foreign to them and they possess the consciousness of being 'soldiers' struggling only for the liberation of their country'.

What is important to us today is not the legacy of warrior queens, but a thorough analysis of the primary system of social organisation around an economically self-sufficient or self-supporting matricentric cultural unit and a gender free or flexible gender linguistic system, which is the legacy of African matriarchy. We need to understand its associated goddess-focussed religions and culture which helped women organise effectively to fight the subordinating and controlling forces of patriarchy, thereby achieving a kind of system of checks and balances. This is basically what the so-called monotheistic and abstract religions of Islam and Christianity ruling Africa today subverted and continue to attack. The fundamental question to those

proposing these religions as a possible means of achieving a pan-African unity or federation is this: are these religions able to accept and accommodate our goddesses and matriarchy, that is, African women's true primordial cultures in the present politics of primordialism, manipulated by nationalists and fundamentalists?

Hinterland Africa proper which had such structures which favoured the rule of goddesses, matriarchy, queens, etc., is indeed still present with us today. But, these systems are facing erosion, as elite African men manipulate the new and borrowed patriarchies to forge a most formidable 'masculine imperialism', yet unknown in our history. How are we ever going to subvert this, since the first casualty has been the autonomy and power of the indigenous women's organisations?

In contrast to the seeming collusion of present-day African daughters of the establishment, the issue of women's role and status in society, far from being a nineteenth century debate, has since the 60s gathered a new force in Western feminist literature and scholarship. In Germany, for example, inquiry into matriarchy is taken very seriously⁵. In the U.S. and Latin America, women's search for spirituality predominates. In Britain, it is a search for ancient goddesses⁶. There is also a revival of witchcraft cults. The whole Green and Ecological movement derives its concept and ideology from the so-called African animism, which is now being acknowledged as a worship of nature. In all this, African ethnography serves as a databank, but with little acknowledgement from the users. Is the history of Greek appropriation of African philosophy and science in the nineteenth century⁷ repeating itself on this eve of the twenty-first century?

Ironically, in all these movements, it is that continent of matriarchy, Africa, where there is no such concern in African scholarship. Is the reason because it is still in the control of christian and islam-produced elite men and women? Is it also because we are now ruled directly by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), The World Bank and foreign aid agencies and the neo-missionaries 'dashing' us money, food, clothes and their books/knowledge, including their toxic waste? In a kind of abstract denial of the social and material reality of the experience of every African child and its mother, as is characteristic of new masculinist patriarchal fabrications by especially elite African men, this continuous copycatting performance and its symptomatic

schizophrenia remains the lot of the colonised African mind.

Because Diop took on the fundamental issue of matriarchy from an Afrocentric perspective and interest, as opposed to a compromised struggle for women's rights in patriarchal systems, what scholar will match the feminism of Cheikh Anta Diop? For him, matriarchy is an 'ensemble of institutions favourable to womanhood and to mankind in general'. As he said, male controlled social science has only seen in this 'dangerous freedom which is almost diabolical'. One wonders why Western matriarchy theorists do not cite the work of Cheikh Anta Diop?

The rage against Diop by white scholars and Western self-interest has not abated. If anything, it is very often, these days, parroted by a particular class of Africans themselves, who are still under their tutelage, supervision and control, the copycats. As for African men, they feel contented to cite only those aspects of the work of the great thinker which serve their purpose, especially the reclaiming of ancient Egyptian civilization. The fundamental thesis of his work, which rests on African matriarchy, is the least given importance and applied.

In the most recent findings in Western search for human racial origins, a racist invention and concern of the West alone, Diop is vindicated time and time again as the primary role of the African mother, whether in the bequeathing of the gene^s or languageⁿ to the human race continues to be 'very scientifically proved'. But racist appropriation continues, even in this era of deconstruction – if these youngest of our children do not call humanity's African mother Lucy, they call her Eve! So, we see again in this, the appropriation of the nineteenth century. To even scientists, it is unthinkable that the fossil of our African mother, found on the African continent, should retain an African name! This crystallises and symbolises the nature of the relationship of European civilization with that of Africa. This structure of appropriation can be found in every other field of relations.

Diop had prayed, 'may this work contribute to a strengthening of the feelings of goodwill which have always united Africans from one end of the continent to the other and thus show our organic cultural unity'. He made it imperative that a full knowledge of lessons must be learnt from the past in order to 'keep one's consciousness the feeling of historical continuity essential to the consolidation of a multinational state'. Like Cheikh Anta Diop, because of our history

of colonialism, African intellectuals, if they are to be free from self-negation, must deconstruct, invalidate and reconstruct. The enforcement of a common currency and a common language above our local languages is an imperative. It does not matter which language, as long as its morphology and syntax have African origin, especially its gender formation. There is no point imposing on us a creole which has incorporated all the patriarchal and racist structures from its parent source. Everyone can in fact start at the same take-off point, if we were to pick the remotest of African language from deep inside the bush and let it grow with us. In which case, there will be no question of imperialism and distrust.

In this project of reconstruction, a gender and class aware social history is a priority. The racist term anthropology, which really should have been social history, must be banned altogether. We must adopt and elaborate the historiography of Cheikh Anta Diop, using his multidisciplinary approach to write an African social history¹⁰ and enforce the teaching of social history in our curriculum. Present day African scholarship only knows the chronological history of kings, queens and conquest. Since in our schools and colleges, there is no social history, nor grassroots history from the bottom and the history of our indigenous social institutions, how then can we begin to build an Afrocentric history and unity without this knowledge? As our great African philosopher and political activist said, let the general commitment of intellectual activism lead to the liquidation of all colonial systems of imperialism. His vision of the universe of tomorrow is that imbued with African optimism. Did Diop thus predict the ecological movement?

This book will remain a classic as long as there are men and women in this world and as long as the West persists in its history of patriarchy, racism and imperialism.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

I have tried to bring out the profound cultural unity still alive beneath the deceptive appearance of cultural heterogeneity.

It would be inexcusable for one led by chance to experience deeply the living reality of the land not to try to furnish knowledge of the African sociological actuality.

To the extent that sociological facts are at the outset based on some motivation instead of existing freely in themselves, it suffices to grasp the guiding thread in order to extricate oneself from the factual maze.

From this point of view, this work represents an effort of rationalization.

It is clear that an African researcher is in a more privileged position than others and consequently there is no particular merit in this attempt to unearth the sociological laws which seem to be the foundation of the social reality in which he lives.

Moreover, had many scholars not preceded us we might not have attained today any of our results.

We must therefore express all our thanks to those scholars of whose work we have made use.

I must recall here the memory of my late professor, Marcel Griaule, who until a fortnight before his death never ceased to give the closest attention to my research work. Equally, I owe a debt of gratitude to M. Gaston Bachelard. To professors André Aymard and Leroi-Gourhan, whose student I was, I must also express my gratefulness.

To come back to the subject of this work, I shall give an indication of those facts which are calculated to reveal my approach.

I have tried to start from material conditions in order to explain all the cultural traits common to Africans, from family life as a nation, touching on the ideological superstructures, the successes and failures and technical regressions.

I was thus led to analyse the structure of the African and the Aryan families and to try to show that the matriarchal basis on which the former rests is not in any way of universal application in spite of appearances.

I have touched briefly on the notions of the state, royalty, morals, philosophy, religion and art, and consequently on literature and aesthetics.

In each of these varied domains I have tried to bring to view the common denominator in African culture as opposed to that of the Northern Aryan culture.

If I have chosen Europe as the region of cultural antithesis, it is because in addition to reasons of a geographical nature the documentary evidence which comes from the Northern Mediterranean lands is more abundant at the present time.

If I were to extend my comparative study beyond India to China, I would run the risk of affirming things of which I were not thoroughly convinced because of lack of documentation.

It will be realised that a work of this nature, which it is hoped will be logically conclusive, could not avoid the gathering and assembling of evidence to support its case instead of referring to this briefly in a more or less offhand manner. The reader would have the right to be sceptical and he could, at the end of the book, have such a feeling of doubt as to have the impression that he had just been reading a work of fiction.

This has obliged us to refer to the documents in question wherever we have considered it necessary.

Obviously I have not been a slave to intellectual conformism. If I had not quoted writers such as Lenormant, who appears now to be old-fashioned, I would have been unable to bring out the caste stratification of the Babylonian, Indian or Sabine societies.

May this work contribute to a strengthening of the feelings of goodwill which have always united Africans from one end of the continent to the other and thus show our organic cultural unity.

FOREWORD

Intellectuals ought to study the past not for the pleasure they find in so doing, but to derive lessons from it or, if necessary, to discern those lessons in full knowledge of the facts. Only a real knowledge of the past can keep in one's consciousness the feeling of historical continuity essential to the consolidation of a multinational state.

Classical psychology argues that human nature is essentially universal. This is because it wants to see the triumph of humanism. For the latter to become possible, man must not be by nature impervious to any manifestation of feeling, etc., on the part of his fellow man. His nature, his consciousness and his spirit must be capable of assimilating through education everything which is initially foreign to him.

But this does not mean to say that human consciousness has been modified since the very earliest days by the particular experiences undergone in communities which developed separately. In this sense, there existed in the beginning, before the successive contacts of peoples and of nations, before the age of reciprocal influences, certain non-essential relative differences among peoples. These differences had to do with the climate and the specific conditions of life. The peoples who lived for a lengthy period of time in their place of origin were moulded by their surroundings in a durable fashion. It is possible to go back to this original mould by identifying the outside influences which have been superimposed on it. It is not a matter of indifference for a people to devote itself to such an inquiry or to acquire such a recognition of itself. For by doing this the people in question becomes aware of what is solid and valid in its own cultural and social structures and in its thought in general; it becomes aware also of what is weak therein and consequently what has not been able to withstand the passage of time. It can discern the real extent of its borrowings from others and can now define itself in a positive fashion

using not imaginary but real indigenous criteria. It will have a new consciousness of its worth and can now determine its cultural mission, not in a prejudiced, but in an objective manner; for they can better understand the cultural values which it is most fitted to develop and contribute to other peoples, allowances being made for the state of evolution.

Avant-garde ideas should not be developed prematurely. It is only necessary to refer to the preface of *Nations Nègres et Culture* published in 1953-1954. Since September 1946, in lecture after lecture I had familiarized African students with the ideas which were developed in that work. Until these last two years, not only did African politicians not accept these ideas but certain ones even attempted to criticise them on a purely doctrinal basis.

The very people who in their writings or in their speeches wished to show that national independence is a phase in the evolution of peoples which is now out-of-date, and who could not raise themselves to any form of independent African federation or the idea of a multinational African state, are the ones who are today surreptitiously fostering the ideas contained in the preface to *Nations Nègres et Culture*. Their actual political platforms appear to be simply copies of that preface, when they are not still short of the ideas which are developed therein.

CHAPTER I

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF MATRIARCHY

An Account of the theories of J.J. Bachofen, Morgan and F. Engels with a Criticism of these.

This chapter is devoted to a concise statement of the theories relating to the reign of matriarchy considered as a general stage in human evolution. The first historian to deal with this subject was J.J. Bachofen who in 1861 published *Das Mutterrecht*. In 1871 an American, Morgan, confirmed the views of Bachofen on the evolution of the earliest societies, in his work *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity*. Finally, in 1884, Frederick Engels related the points of view of Bachofen and Morgan, relying on their discoveries as authoritative sources of material the better to affirm and demonstrate the historical basis of the family in his work, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

THEORY OF BACHOFEN

The account of this theory is taken mainly from the work which Adrien Turel devoted to its author: *Du Règne de la Mère au Patriarcat* (From Mother-Right to Patriarchy). It is, as far as I am aware, the only work on the subject which exists in French.

Bachofen considers that mankind in its earliest states underwent a period of barbarism and sexual promiscuity, so that descent could only be reckoned through the female line, all paternal descent being doubtful. Marriage did not exist.

A second stage, called the gynæcocratic, follows on the first as its logical sequel. It is characterized by marriage and the supremacy of the woman; descent is still reckoned following the female line as

during the preceding period. This is the real age of matriarchy according to Bachofen. Amazonism is equally characteristic of this stage.

Finally there comes a third stage, distinguished from the others by a new form of marriage under the domination of the male, by masculine imperialism: this is the reign of patriarchy.

Patriarchy is superior to matriarchy; it represents above all spirituality, light, reason and delicacy. It is represented by the sun, the heavenly heights, where reigns a sort of ethereal spirituality. In contrast, matriarchy is linked with the cave-like depths of the earth, to the night, to the moon, to material things, to the 'left' which belongs 'to passive femininity in opposition to the right which is linked with masculine activity'.

Bachofen takes his principal argument from an analysis of the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus which he considers as describing the struggle between mother-right and father-right. In the heroic age the Greeks were ruled by a gynaeocracy.

Gradually this deteriorated and, being no longer adapted to circumstances, had to be eliminated, together with old attendant earthly gods, the Eumenides. They gave way to the young heavenly deities of patriarchy; Apollo, and Athena, the motherless maiden.

The subject of the play is as follows: Agamemnon, the commander of the Greek armies, returns from the Trojan War and finds his wife with a lover, Aegisthus. Clytemnestra rids herself of her husband by murdering him. Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, avenges his father by killing his mother: he is then pursued by the protective goddesses of mother-right, the Eumenides, or Furies. For them, the gravest murder that can be committed, the only one for which no atonement is possible, is matricide.

In the *choephoroi* the Furies express themselves as follows:

Chorus Leader: *The prophet-god bade thee thy mother slay?*

Orestes: *Yea, and through him less ill I fared, till now.*

Chorus Leader: *If the vote grip thee, thou shalt change that word.*

Orestes: *Strong is my hope; my buried sire shall aid.*

Chorus Leader: *Go to now, trust the dead, a matricide!*

Orestes: *Yea, for in her combined two stains of sin.*

Chorus Leader: *How? Speak this clearly to the judge's mind.*

Orestes: *Slaying her husband, she did slay my sire.*

Chorus Leader: *Therefore thou livest; death assoils her deed.*

Orestes: *Then while she lived why didst thou hunt her not?*

Chorus Leader: *She was not kin by blood to him she slew.*

Orestes: *And I, am I by blood my mother's kin?*

Chorus Leader: *O cursed with murder's guilt, how else wert thou
The burden of her womb? Dost thou forswear
Thy mother's kinship, closest bond of love?*¹

The case is all the more significant since it is Apollo, who, according to the will of Zeus, commanded Orestes to commit the crime; in addition he undertakes his defence. Athena presides over the court which is to judge Orestes. Here is Apollo's speech for the defence before the vote of the Areopagites:

Apollo:

*This too I answer: mark a soothfast word
Not the true parent is the woman's womb
That bears the child: she doth but nurse the seed
New-sown: the male is parent; she for him,
As stranger for a stranger, hoards the germ
Of life, unless the god its promise blight.
And proof hereof before you will I set:
Birth may from fathers, without mothers, be;
See at your side a witness of the same,
Athenoa, daughter of Olympian Zeus,
Never within the darkness of the womb
Fostered nor fashioned, but a bud more bright
Than any goddess in her breast might bear.*²

After the speech of Apollo, the contrast between the two systems and their irreducible character is sufficiently manifest. The Areopagites vote. A second ballot is necessary, both parties having cast the same number of votes; but Athena, who presides at the hearing and who has not yet taken any part in the voting, gives her vote to Orestes, who is thus acquitted of the murder of his mother. This gesture seals the triumph of the new regimes: Athena explains herself as follows:

*Mine is the right to add the final vote,
And I award it to Orestes' cause.*

*For me no mother bore within her womb,
And, save for wedlock evermore schewed,
I vouch myself the champion of the man,
Not of the woman, yea with all my soul,
In heart, as birth, a father's child alone.
Thus will I not too heinously regard
A woman's death who did her husband slay,
The guardian of her home; and if the votes
Equal do fall, Orestes shall prevail.*

*Ye of the judges who are named thereto,
Swiftly shake for the lots from either urn.*³

For Bachofen the ubiquity of matriarchy is undeniable; it is not the distinctive trait of any particular people, but has controlled at a given time the social organisation of all the peoples of the earth: from whence the numerous traces found in the classical literature of antiquity.

There was therefore a universal transition from matriarchy to patriarchy, which does not of course imply that this took place during the same period for all peoples. But according to the evolutionary conception of the author, it was undoubtedly a transition from an inferior to a superior state, a veritable spiritual ascension by humanity taken in its entirety.

THEORY OF MORGAN

Though using different methods, Morgan arrived at the same conclusion as Bachofen as far as matriarchy and the female line of descent are concerned. He used the system of consanguinity practised by the Iroquois Indians of New York State, as a basis for reconstructing the primitive forms of the human family. In this way he built up a theory which he used to explain obscure points in the social and family organisation of classical antiquity (genos, phratries, tribes, etc.). His theory, fully set down by Engels (*op. cit.*), is as follows:

Morgan, who spent a great part of his life among the Iroquois Indians settled to this day in New York State and was adopted into one of their tribes (the Senecas), found in use among them a system

of consanguinity which was in contradiction to their actual family relationships. There prevailed among them a form of monogamy easily terminable on both sides, which Morgan calls the 'pairing family'. The issue of the married pair was therefore known and recognised by everybody: there could be no doubt about whom to call father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister. But these names were actually used quite differently. The Iroquois calls not only his own children his sons and daughters, but also the children of his brothers; and they call him father. The children of his sister, however, he calls his nephews and nieces, and they call him their uncle. The Iroquois woman, on the other hand, calls her sisters' children, as well as her own, her sons and daughters, and they call her mother. But her brothers' children she calls her nephews and nieces, and she is known as their aunt. Similarly, the children of brothers call one another brother and sister, and so do the children of sisters. A woman's own children and the children of her brother, on the other hand, call one another cousins...⁴

Engels thinks that these are not just simple names, but terms which express the real degrees of consanguinity or more precisely the ideas which the Iroquois themselves have on consanguineous relationships. Next, he insists on the extent and vigour of this system of consanguinity which is found all over North America – no exception having been met with amongst the Indians – and in India among the Dravidians in the Deccan and the Gauras in Hindustan. More than two hundred degrees of consanguinity are expressed in the same terms by the Tamils of India and the Iroquois. Moreover among both these peoples there is a distinction between the real kinship arising out of the existing family system, and the way in which this is expressed in the language.

Morgan finds the explanation of this anomaly in a type of family existing in Hawaii in the first half of the nineteenth century which he called *punaluan*: this will be analysed later.

For him the family is the dynamic element with constantly changing forms, while the terms used to express these forms remain static during a relatively long period of time. In this way there is produced a sort of fossilisation of the system of consanguinity in so far as this is expressed in words. It is long afterwards that language registers any progress which has been made.

...But just as Cuvier could deduce from the marsupial bone of an animal skeleton found near Paris that it belonged to a marsupial animal and that extinct marsupial animals once lived there, so with the same certainty we can deduce from the historical survival of a system of consanguinity that an extinct form of family once existed which corresponded to it.⁵

By working his way back from the 'historical survival of a system of consanguinity', Morgan reconstructs the history of the family and uncovers four main types which followed one after the other.

The oldest, which arose out of the primitive state of promiscuous intercourse, is the family which is said to be consanguine: it is marked by the fact that marriage is only forbidden between parents and their children. All the men of one generation are married to all the women of the same generation; all the 'grandfathers' to all the 'grandmothers' and so on, and consequently all the brothers and sisters are married to each other. The consanguine family has disappeared even among the most primitive peoples; but Morgan affirms its existence on the basis of consanguinity found in Hawaii.

The second is the *punaluan* family. As humanity had become dimly conscious of the disadvantages resulting from the union of brothers and sisters which causes debility in the descendants, the forbidding of such union would have appeared as a necessity. From this point on, it is a whole group of sisters or of cousins which will be wed by a group of brothers or cousins outside their circle. These brothers call each other *punalua*, as do the women. Hence the name given by Morgan to this type of family. The *punaluan* family occupies a position of great importance in the theory of Morgan, in the sense that he derives from it the *genos* which is the basis of the whole politico-social organisation of classical antiquity.

...How powerfully the influence of this advance made itself felt is seen in the institution which arose directly out of it and went far beyond it – the gens, which forms the basis of the social order of most, if not all, barbarian peoples of the earth and from which in Greece and Rome we step directly into civilisation.⁶

For Morgan this type of family accounts completely for the system of consanguinity of the Iroquois. In fact, sisters have, as it were, all

their children in common. Reciprocally, all brothers are fathers in common: all common children consider themselves to be brothers and sisters. But since marriage is forbidden between true brothers and sisters, the children of one sister will be the nephews and nieces of a brother who will be their uncle, while her sister is the aunt of the children of the latter. Children are thus divided into two classes: on the one hand, sons and daughters and, on the other hand, nephews and nieces; these two groups are cousins of each other.

Morgan derives the descent in the female line from these two first stages in the history of the family. Matriarchy is implied in this type of group marriage since only the matrilineal line of descent is evident; it therefore precedes patriarchy.

The third form is the pairing family. This is monogamy with mutual facilities for divorce: this was the type which existed throughout American Indian society when Morgan carried out his investigations. The line of descent is matrilineal and it is the man who brings the dowry to the woman. The latter does not leave her family group and can turn out her husband (who necessarily belongs to a different gens) if he fails to provide enough food for the common provender. Whatever may be the reasons for any separation, the children remain entirely in the mother's gens.

The matriarchal system in its most highly developed form is thus handed down to us by the pairing family.

The fourth type is the monogamous patriarchal family where divorce is rendered if not impossible, at least extremely difficult, where the woman lives in total dependence on her husband and is legally subjected to him. In this family the line of descent is patrilineal.

Another discovery made by Morgan, whose importance has been emphasized by Engels, is the identification of the 'totemic' clans of the American Indians with the Greek *genos* and the Roman *gens*. He established that it was the Indian forms of social organisation which are the more ancient and that the Greco-Latin forms are derived from them: it is the 'totemic' clans which gave rise to the *genos*.

...This proof has cleared up at one stroke the most difficult questions in the most ancient periods of Greek and Roman history, providing us at the same time with an unsuspected wealth of information about the fundamental features of social constitution in primitive times – before the introduction of the state...⁷

While Bachofen has taken the traces of matriarchy which are contained in the classical literature of antiquity – and in particular, in the *Oresteia of Aeschylus* – as confirming the universality and precedence of matriarchy, Morgan reaches the same conclusions from his study of the Indian societies of America. He finds there a system of consanguinity which impresses him by its unusual character. He initiates an investigation by the American government throughout the whole of the territory occupied by the Indians and is thus able to establish the generality of the system. Work carried out in other parts of the world (Africa, India, Oceania) confirms his observations.

At the same time as he is reconstructing the history of the family from these data, Morgan is studying the organisation of the Iroquois clans and arrives at the conclusion that the matriarchy which rules there is of a universal type similar to that which, at a given moment in their evolution, has governed all peoples.

THEORY OF ENGELS

The conclusions of Bachofen and Morgan are of the greatest importance to a Marxist such as Engels, who was interested in demonstrating the historicity, the temporary nature of all forms of political and social organisation. The facts mentioned above served him as material for showing that the traditional bourgeois monogamous family, far from being a permanent form, will be stricken by the same decay as previous institutions. It is clear, therefore, why he was led to adopt the theories of Morgan and Bachofen on a universal matriarchy. He attempted to enrich these by a contribution on *The Gens among the Celts and Germans* (Chapter VII of his book).

In so far as Engels especially contributed his arguments to support the theories of matriarchy which he needed for his own thesis, it is in Chapter II, devoted to a criticism of this work, that we shall return to his ideas. The examination of which these ideas will be the object is in no way intended as an attack on the principles of Marxism: it is intended only to show that a Marxist has made use, in a theoretical work, of material the soundness of which had not been proved.

Aeschylus, the Creator of the Attic tragedy, was convinced that every human act posed a problem of law and of justice; thus drama must of necessity deal with justice. This seems to be the end that

the author was consciously trying to attain. He was thus led to use material pertaining to a period in which the idea of justice was practically identical with a kind of stoic resignation to fate, to fatality. To this severity of custom of the earliest societies, Aeschylus, who lived in another age, wished to propose a more flexible justice, more suited to the progress of the human consciousness of his time, and less rudimentary.

However, all the cultural material used in his work is equally a reflection of the conscious struggle between the social principles of the North and the South. It is for this reason that Bachofen had no difficulty in seeing in *The Oresteia* the struggle between matriarchy and patriarchy, with the triumph of the latter.

To return to the idea of justice, the attitude of the chorus of Furies, hostile to Orestes, can be mentioned.

*Hist - he is there! See him his arms entwine
Around the image of the maid divine -
Thus aided, for the deed he wrought
Unto the judgement wills he to be brought.
It may not be! a mother's blood, poured forth
Upon the stained earth,
None gathers up: it lies - bear witness, Hell! -
For aye indelible!
And thou who sheddest it shalt give thine own
That shedding to atone!
Yea, from thy living limbs I suck it out,
Red, clotted, gout by gout...⁸*

Orestes appeals to Athena, explains his action to her and asks her protection. Athena replies in terms which call attention to the problems of this new justice: a justice which seems to transcend the frailty of mortal's conscience which is laden especially with feelings of vengeance and of hatred; in short, a justice which is absolutely serene.

Athena:

*Too mighty is this matter, whosoe'er
Of mortals claims to judge hereof aright.
Yea, me, even me, eternal Right forbids*

*To judge the issues of blood-guilt, and wrath
That follows swift behind...*

*Yet, as on me Fate hath imposed the cause,
I choose unto me judges that shall be
An ordinance forever, set to rule
The dues of blood-guilt, upon oath declared.
But ye, call forth your witness and your proof,
Words strong for justice, fortified by oath,
And I, whome'er are truest in my town,
Them will I choose and bring, and straitly charge,
Look on this cause, discriminating well,
And pledge your oath to utter nought of wrong.⁹*

The chorus reacts as might be expected, by expressing its concern regarding the new laws, which the goddess wishes to establish for all time, as soon as the judgement of the heavenly tribunal has been given.

Chorus:

*Now are they all undone, the ancient laws,
If here the slayer's cause
Prevail; new wrong for ancient right shall be
If matricide go free.
Henceforth a deed like his by all shall stand,
Too ready to the hand:
Too oft shall parents in the aftertime
Rue and lament this crime,
Taught, not in false imagining, to feel
Their children's thrusting steel...¹⁰*

A new edition of the complete works of Bachofen was published in Basle between 1943 and 1948¹¹. Volumes II and III are devoted to matriarchy. In these Bachofen studies the manners and customs of the Aegean populations such as the Lycians, the Cretans, the Athenians, the people of Lemnos, the Egyptians, the Indians and the inhabitants of Central Asia, the Ozolians, Locrians and the people of Lesbos. He finishes with a study of Pythagoreanism and its later aspects. The complete work contains one thousand pages.

The author reveals among all the peoples studied the cultural features which he attributes to matriarchy, the very ones which are set forth in his work. He sees a matriarchal element in the role played by the woman in Pythagorean initiation. Our criticism of Bachofen's theory will consist mainly of an analysis of these facts.

The work of Morgan is made up of three parts ¹². In the first, after a general introduction devoted to the system of consanguinity, the author shows the existence of two systems, the one classificatory or non-Aryan; the other, descriptive or Aryan (Indo-European). Proceeding from this distinction he studies the system of consanguinity of the Indo-European, Semitic and Uralian families.

In the second, he makes a study of the Ganowanian family (American Indians) and that of the Eskimo.

In the third he examines the Turanian family, the Malayan family, and those of other Asiatic peoples.

At the end of each study of a particular group is shown a diagram of the corresponding system; two of these are reproduced here dealing with consanguinity in the non-Aryan classification scheme.

According to Pastor Leenhardt, duality and equality play an essential part in the Melanesian ideas of consanguinity.

Duality: when the basis of the relationship appears to be organic, such as mother and child, brother and sister and also on another level, as father and son or husband and wife.

Equality: when the two members are in a reciprocal position, equal in right and each constituting the counterpart of the other. E.g. maternal uncle and nephew, etc. Equality is more concrete than duality...

The dual (duality) helps the Kanaka to place human equality in different domains, spatial, social and parental. In these domains only one has clearly defined boundaries and is divided into restricted parts: the parental domain.

The dividing lines which mark these divisions are permanent, as is the territory within them. They surround it like a plot of land and the Kanaka sees in this the proper domain in which takes place the relating of two kinsmen, confounded in an equality.

He calls this ensemble by a single substantive dual: thus *duaeri* means: equality between grandfather and grandson; *duamara* means: equality between a uterine uncle and a nephew;

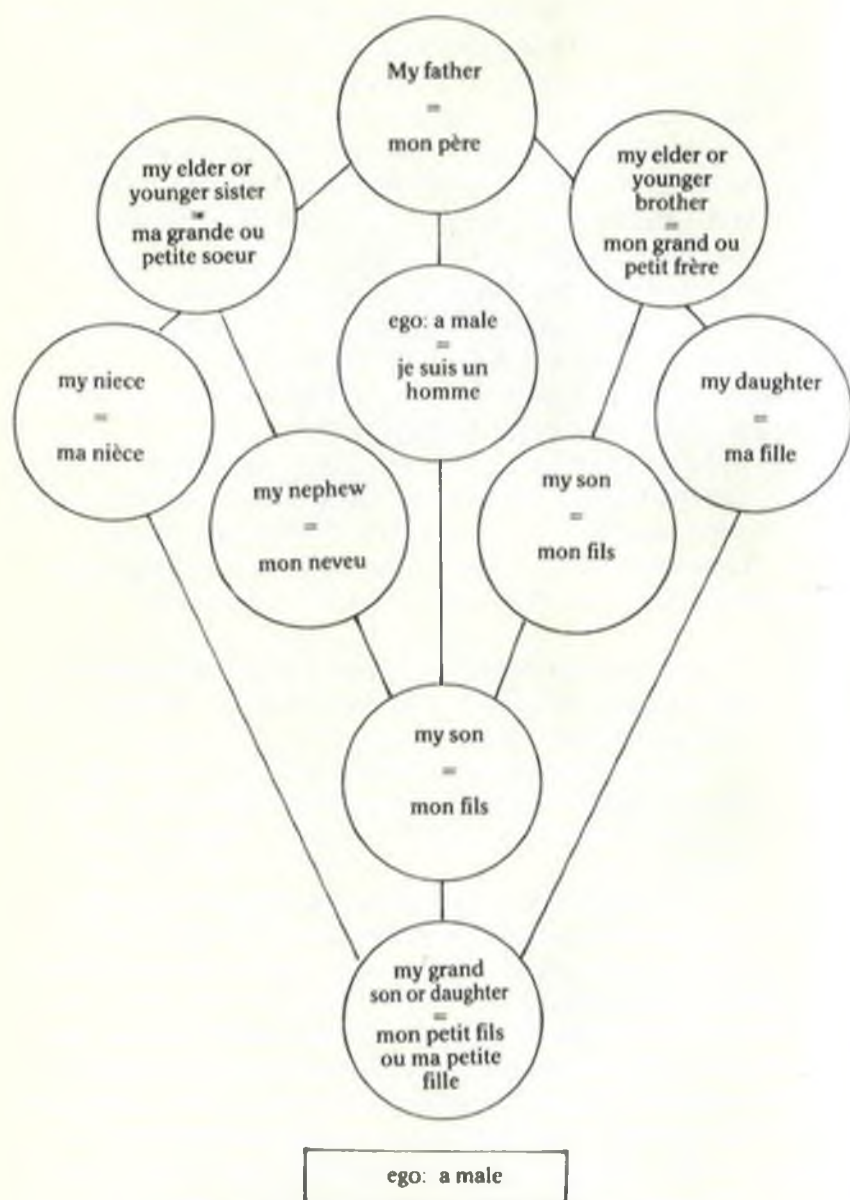
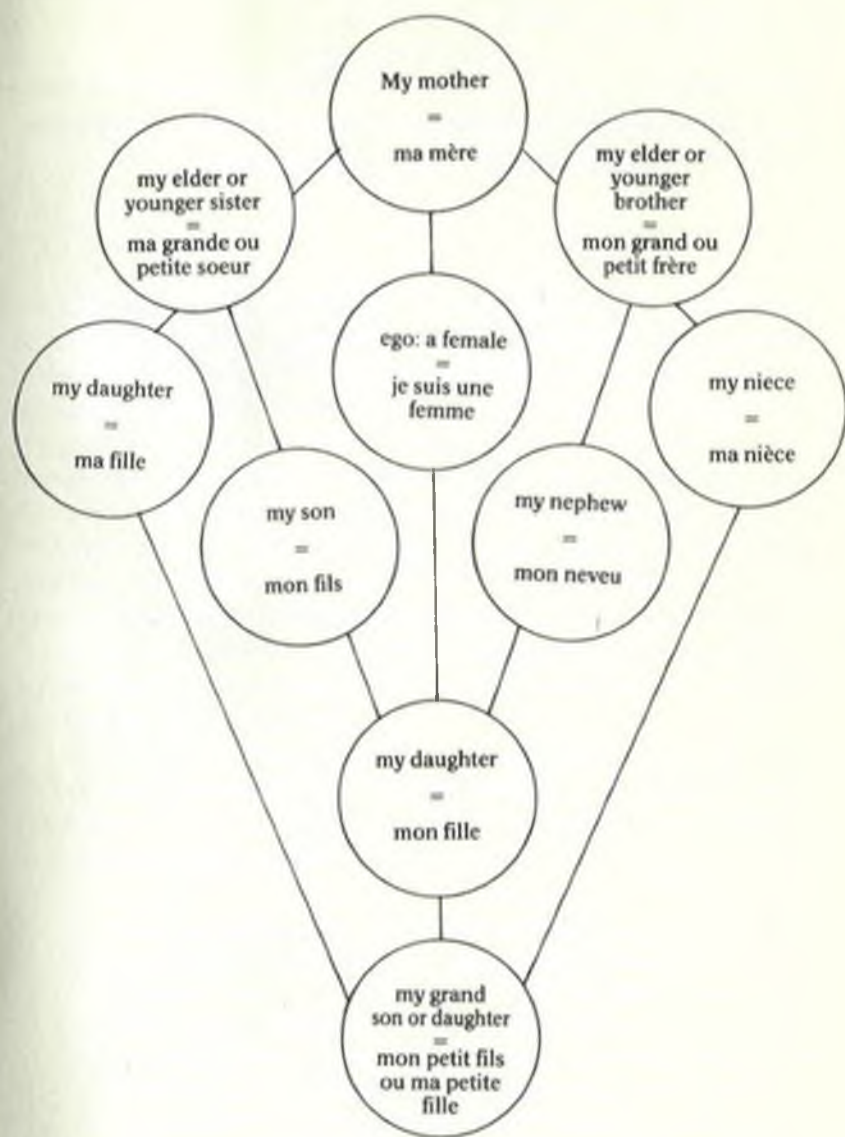


Diagram of consanguinity: Seneca Iroquois
 extracted from: *System of Consanguinity* (Morgan).



ego: a female

Diagram of consanguinity of an Iroquois woman after Morgan.

duawe means: conjugal equality;

duavene means: homonymous equality since the homonym corresponds to the identity of individuals.

The analysis of Maurice Leenhardt ¹³ could equally have been compared with that of Pierre Metais in *Mariage et Equilibre Social dans les Sociétés Primitives*.

CHAPTER II

CRITICISM OF THE CLASSICAL THEORY OF A UNIVERSAL MATRIARCHY

This criticism could be of appreciable use in the field of historical research. In fact, if it were proved – contrary to the generally accepted theory – that instead of a universal transition from matriarchy to patriarchy, humanity has from the beginning been divided into two geographically distinct ‘cradles’ one of which was favourable to the flourishing of matriarchy and the other to that of patriarchy, and that these two systems encountered one another and even disputed with each other as different human societies, that in certain places they were superimposed on each other or even existed side by side, then one could begin to clarify one of the obscure points in the history of antiquity. A criterion would then exist enabling one to identify certain vestiges of the past, such as the undeniable traces of matriarchy during the Aegean age.

The classical theory, which has also been adopted by most sociologists and ethnologists – that of Durkheim – has already been questioned by Van Gennep, who himself relied to a certain degree on the work of Graebner.

The standpoint taken by Graebner with regard to this problem is, if I properly understand his words, the following:

‘It seems to me’, he wrote, ‘that at least in Australia one of the systems of consanguinity is not a continued development of the other, but that they have met and mingled with each other, one system predominating in one region and the other, in another.’ This is to say, I think, that peoples reckoning their descent in the male line would have come in contact with peoples reckoning theirs in the female line and that there would have been an interpenetration of the two systems, both of which were originally autonomous institutions.

The fact is, that among several tribes of Central Australia, one finds both systems of descent applied side by side.

Among the Arunta, for example, where male descent rules the greater part of the institutions, there are to be found at the same time undeniable traces of female descent, 'which is evidence – according to Durkheim – of its prior existence'.¹

Van Gennep shows that the attitude of Durkheim to this problem was not clearly defined, and that at times he seemed to admit the original autonomy of each system. It was following his '*critical study of the second volume of Spencer and Guillen*' that his position was finally determined: Resuming his argument, he at last states clearly: "the priority of maternal descent over paternal descent is so evident among the different societies of which we have just spoken, and is demonstrated by such an abundance of proof, that it seems difficult for us to cast doubt upon it."²

Van Gennep accuses Durkheim of having resolved the problem without having formulated it properly. The only thing that the latter had shown in his extensive study of matrimonial relations in the societies of Oceania, is that there exists an infinite combination of both these systems of descent but not the antecedence of one over the other.

The antecedence and the inferiority of the system of maternal descent could well be due, in our opinion, to a preconception: our European civilisations, while revealing in certain places traces of female descent, are to such an extent based on the other system, that our unconscious tendency is to consider male descent as superior and culturally posterior to the other. It is this principle that we apply to other peoples.

As it is only just, this *a priori* theory was explained after the fact: it was said that the relationship of the child with the mother could not admit of any doubt, while the relationship to the father could scarcely be other than questionable, especially among savages. But great care was taken not to precede this assertion by a thorough study of the opinions of savages on the mechanism of conception, a study moreover which, in spite of a few detailed works on the subject, still remains to be carried out to this day.³

It seems that the '*unconscious tendency*' mentioned by Van Gennep

when describing the West – whose civilisation is ‘to such an extent based’ on patriarchy – justifies the hierarchy, established by Bachofen, between matriarchy and patriarchy. It will be remembered that for him, patriarchy was synonymous with spiritual yearning towards the divine regions of the sky, with purity and moral chastity, while matriarchy was synonymous with the passive dependence on earthly life, material things and bodily needs. Instead of the expansion of those – particularly the woman – who are linked to matriarchy and the respect with which the matriarchal woman is surrounded appearing to him as the real advancement, aiding him to establish an objective hierarchy of values, he can only see in this ensemble of institutions favourable to womanhood and to mankind in general the expression of a dangerous freedom which is almost diabolical. The hierarchy thus existing between the two systems lacks, therefore, any objective foundation.

A first important criticism which can be made of the theory of Bachofen is that it makes an important omission, which has not been given sufficient prominence. The demonstration of a universal transition from matriarchy to patriarchy is only scientifically acceptable if it can be proved that this internal evolution has definitely taken place among a specific people. Now this condition has never been fulfilled in the works of the author. *It has never been possible to determine the existence of a historical period during which the Greeks and the Romans might have lived under matriarchy.* This difficulty is gotten round by replacing the Greeks and Romans by aboriginal peoples which they found on the spot at the time of their becoming sedentary, peoples whom they destroyed as the representative of an alien culture. Thus it is therefore necessary to go back to the time of the Etruscans, who were completely destroyed by the Romans, in order to show the existence of matriarchy in Italy. Now, nothing is more doubtful than the gynaecocracy of Etruscans, as will be shown later. When discussing the Athenians, the factors justifying the existence of matriarchy must be sought among the Pelasgians.

When it is examined closely, the theory of Bachofen appears to be anti-scientific. It is unlikely that such geographically different cradles as the Eurasian steppes – favourable to a nomadic life – and the Southern regions of the globe and in particular Africa – favourable to agriculture and a sedentary way of life – could have produced the

same types of social organisation. This criticism gains in importance if the influence of environment on social and political forms is admitted. In supposing that matriarchy originated in the South and patriarchy in the North, that the former preceded the latter in the Mediterranean basin, and that in Western Asia both systems were superimposed on each other in certain regions, the hypothesis of a universal transition from one to the other ceases to be necessary; the gaps in the different theories disappear and the ensemble of facts can be explained: the status of women, modes of inheritance, dowries, the nature of consanguinity, etc.

As far as one can go back into Indo-European history, especially by means of comparative linguistics, only one form of patriarchal family can be found which seems to be common to all the tribes before their division (Aryans, Greeks, Romans). Verbal expressions relating to nomadic life are common to all these people, unlike those terms which concern the political and agricultural way of life:

The common roots for designating live-stock bear witness to pastoral customs. The flock of live-stock (*pacu* in Sanskrit, *pecu* in Latin, *fihu-vieh* in German) was the principal wealth (*pecunia*). It consisted mainly of cattle (Sanskrit and Avestan, *gau*; Armenian, *kov*; Greek, *bous*; Latin, *bos*; Irish, *bō*) and sheep (Sanskrit, *avi*; Lithuanian, *avis*; Greek, *ois*; Latin, *ovis*; Irish, *oi*; High German, *ouwi*; Ancient Slav, *ovinu*). The ox, like the horse, was yoked to the waggon, for the name 'yoke' is remarkably well preserved in different languages (*yuga* in Sanskrit, *jugum* in Latin, *zygon* in Greek, *juk* in Gothic, *jungas* in Lithuanian). In the same way, root can be found which is applied sometimes to the waggon itself (*ratha* in Sanskrit, *rathō* in Avestan), and sometimes to the wheel (*rota* in Latin, *roth* in Old Irish, *ratas* in Lithuanian, *rad* in Old High German).

From the foregoing it would seem to follow, that the Indo-Europeans, towards the end of their common life, were a people of shepherds, sheep- and cattle-raisers, and as such, were if not semi-nomadic, at least fairly mobile.⁴

This nomadic life is characteristic of the Indo-European races. According to Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, the Scythian's house was his waggon. The same thing occurred during a later period among the Germans. This is confirmed by the absence of any generic term

denoting the word 'city' in the primitive foundation of the vocabulary:

The head of the family 'head of the house': Sanskrit, *dampati*; Greek, *despotes* (for *demspota*); Latin, *dominus*. A common root designates sometimes the house, sometimes the groups of houses or village (Sanskrit, *vic*; Avestan, *vis*; Latin, *vicus*; Greek, *oikos*), with a village head (*vicpati* in Sanskrit, *visipaiti* in Avestan, *vėszpats* in Lithuanian). There is, at first, no expression for the city, but a word which stands for 'fortified place', which at some future period will signify 'city' (*pur* in Sanskrit, *pilis* in Lithuanian, *polis* in Greek).⁵

In this existence which was reduced to a series of perpetual migrations, the economic role of the woman was reduced to a strict minimum; she was only a burden that the man dragged behind him. Outside her function of child-bearing, her rôle in nomadic society is nil. It is from these considerations that a new explanation may be sought to account for the lot of the woman in Indo-European society. Having a smaller economic value, it is she who must leave her clan to join that of her husband, contrary to the matriarchal custom which demands the opposite.

Among the Greeks, the Romans and the Aryans of India, the woman who leaves her own *genos* (or *gens*) to join her husband's *gens* becomes attached to the latter and can no longer inherit from her own; she has broken with her natural family, in the eyes of which she is no more than a stranger. She can no longer take part in the family worship, without which no relationship is possible; she must even compensate for her economic inferiority by the dowry she brings to her husband. *The latter has the right of life and death over her: he is not answerable to the state in regard to the lot to which he can submit her.* This private institution, preceding that of the state and going back to the period of communal life on the Eurasian steppes, remained inviolable for a very long period. The husband was able to sell his wife or to select an eventual husband for her, in anticipation of his own death.

For a long time after the Indo-Europeans established fixed settlements, their women remained cloistered. Engels recalls that at best they learnt to spin, to weave, to sew and to read a little; they could only come in contact with other women: they were secluded in the gynaeceum, which formed a separate part of the household, either

on an upper floor or at the rear of the main house, to remove them from the view of men, and especially from strangers. They were not allowed to go out without being accompanied by a slave. The making of eunuchs to watch over the women is typically Indo-European and Asiatic: at the time of Herodotus, the principal centre of this traffic was Chios⁶.

A sort of incipient polygamy also existed among the Indo-Europeans:

...the entire *Iliad*, it will be remembered, turns on the quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon over one of these slaves. If a hero is of any importance, Homer also mentions the captive girl with whom he shares his tent and his bed. These girls were also taken back to Greece and brought under the same roof as the wife, as Cassandra was brought by Agamemnon in Aeschylus; the sons begotten of them received a small share of the paternal inheritance and had the full status of freedom. Teucer, for instance, is a natural son of Telamon by one of these slaves and has the right to use his father's name. The legitimate wife was expected to put up with all this, but herself to remain strictly chaste and faithful...⁷

Polygamy was equally in force among the Germanic aristocracy at the time of Tacitus.

Monogamy, which seems at first sight to be the prerogative of the Indo-European world and expresses an almost religious respect for women, in contrast to the disdain of which she would seem to be the object in more southerly regions, has only very painfully been established through the years, as a result of economic pressure.⁸

Matrilineal consanguinity does not exist among the Indo-Europeans: the children of two sisters belong to different families, those of their fathers. In contrast to the matriarchal customs, these children have no tie of consanguinity. It is the same with their mothers, who cannot inherit one from the other. Only the eldest child of male sex inherits; if there are no children, it is the brother and not the sister of the deceased who then inherits. If there are no brothers, a male ancestor of the nearest collateral branch is sought and one of his living male descendants becomes the heir.⁹

Under this regime, where all rights, especially political ones, are transmitted by the father, it will be understood how the various

languages do not express precisely female consanguinity.

In all the Indo-European tongues, say the linguists, the terms of consanguinity are remarkably well preserved in the case of the family of the man. In contrast there is complete lack of precision in the case of the family of the woman.¹⁰

During a difficult and lengthy journey the woman becomes a useless mouth to feed. This is the only sociological explanation that can be given for the suppression at birth of female children among the nomadic tribes. With the attainment of a more settled existence, this practice lost its utility and was forbidden by the Bible and the Koran. In the preface of the work by Engels can be found a criticism directed to an author, MacLennan, who attempted to explain the origin of matrilineal descent, which he also considered to be the oldest and the most primitive type. MacLennan proceeds from a hypothesis according to which the matriarchy is linked with the forcible capture of women and the murder of children. That is only a hypothesis which, if it is correct, must be confirmed by the facts. But experience proves the contrary and MacLennan was sincere enough to acknowledge this with surprise, as Engels notes:

Apparently MacLennan's theory, plausible though it was, did not seem any too well established even to its author. At any rate, he himself is struck by the fact that *'it is observable that the form of capture is now most distinctly marked and impressive just among those races which have male kinship'* (should be *"descent in the male line"*)... And again, *'It is a curious fact that nowhere now, that we are aware of, is infanticide a system where exogamy and the earliest form of kinship co-exist'*... Both these facts flatly contradict his method of explanation, and he can only meet them with new and still more complicated hypotheses.¹¹

WORSHIP OF ASHES

From the hypothesis of a double cradle the practice of cremation becomes intelligible. It is certain, in fact, that under nomadism one could not direct one's worship to permanent tombs; now ancestor worship already existed and was expressed in the form of a domestic

religion, to which we will return. The only solution which was available was to reduce the bodies of the dead to a minimum weight and volume so that they could be easily transported. Thus the urns containing the ashes of one's ancestors were nothing but travelling cemeteries which followed behind the herds seeking new pastures. It is known that the most immutable, the most difficult practices to abandon are those which are dependent on religion; thus the worship of ashes was perpetuated even after the establishment of permanent settlement in Greece, Rome and in India. It ceased then to appear to be a logical practice which could be explained within its local context. It became all the more unintelligible by the fact that the tomb, which had since become a necessity, was adopted parallel to it; and this resulted in rites which were somewhat curious in the sense that since the past always insists upon its rights, the dead were frequently cremated before they were buried. Caesar was cremated, as were Gandhi and Einstein.

FIRE WORSHIP

The peace of the Manes, or spirits, depended on keeping alive a fire which must never be allowed to go out. This was the domestic fire lighted upon an altar. The peculiarity lies in the presence of the fire, for ancestor worship is the prerogative of no single people: its universality can easily be admitted. As a result, the altars consequent upon it are to be found equally in all countries, but it is only among the Indo-Europeans that they will be found surmounted by a sacred fire, which must never be extinguished. It is difficult not to link the presence of this fire with the cold characteristic of the northern climate; its beneficial rôle is of prime importance. Because it was so useful, it became sacred and was worshipped as such. It is thus that the worship of fire is characteristic of the Northern cradle; if one studied the 'sociology' of the everlasting flames of, say, war memorials, it would be difficult not to trace these back to this source.

The hypothesis of the double cradle has permitted us therefore to account for those facts which are characteristic of Indo-European society, of which, in the beginning, nomadism was undoubtedly the principal trait:

The term 'to till' is common to all tongues except the Indo-Iranian (*aroō* in Greek, *aro* in Latin, *airim* in Irish, *arin* in Armenian). The absence of the word 'to till' among the Indo-Iranians can be explained by supposing that these people had lost its usage completely during their lengthy migrations following a transitory period of nomadic life.¹²

It can be assumed that if the language had recorded the term before the separation of the Indo-Iranian branch, then the cultivated areas and the fields which were crossed during the migration would have kept some memory of it in the language.

A language can contain expressions which apply to plants without it being necessary for the people who speak the language to cultivate these. One cannot therefore deduce from the existence of a word which refers to a cereal, the agricultural character of a people.

It is therefore almost certain that at the moment of their division, all the Indo-European tribes were still nomadic. Their sedentary way of life and their practice of agriculture post-dating this division, it is comprehensible that those who almost simultaneously settled to the north of the Mediterranean, would have adopted similar terms while the Indo-Iranians would have adopted a different one, perhaps by contact with the Dravidian agricultural populations.

SOUTHERN CRADLE AND MATRIARCHY

The preceding account establishes that when the social structure is such that on marriage the woman leaves her own family to found one jointly with her husband, one is in the presence of a patriarchal régime; in the beginning the family was evidently merged with the clan. Conversely when the social structure is such that the man who marries leaves his clan to live within that of his wife, one is in the presence of a matriarchal régime. Now the first example is only conceivable in nomadic life and the second only in a sedentary and agricultural way of life: in fact it is only in this framework that the wife can, in spite of her physical inferiority, contribute substantially to the economic life. She even becomes one of the stabilising elements in her capacity as mistress of the house and keeper of the food; it also seems that she even played an important rôle in the discovery of agriculture and in plant selection while the man devoted himself

to the hunt. In those primitive ages when the security of the group was the primary concern, the respect enjoyed by either of the sexes was connected with its contribution to this collective security. In an agricultural régime it can thus be expected that the woman receives a dowry instead of bringing one to her husband, as happens in nomadic life. Sociologically, the significance of the dowry must be explained thus: it is a compensation or a guarantee provided by the less economically favoured sex. If the Indo-European woman in providing the dowry cannot be said to be buying her husband, no more can the African man in providing one be said to purchase his wife.

It can equally be understood that descent should be reckoned, in these two social structures, from that married partner who does not leave the clan after marriage. With the Indo-European nomad descent will be patrilineal, his wife being only a stranger in his *genos*; in contrast to this, among sedentary peoples descent will be matrilineal because it is the man who is a stranger, whom the woman can at any moment repudiate if he does not perform all his conjugal duties satisfactorily.

...Usually, the female portion ruled the house. The stores were in common; but woe to the luckless husband or lover who was too shiftless to do his share of the providing. No matter how many children, or whatever goods he might have in the house, he might at any time be ordered to pick up his blanket and budge; and after such orders it would not be healthy for him to attempt to disobey. The house would be too hot for him; and... he must retreat to his own clan (*gens*); or, as was often done, go and start a new matrimonial alliance in some other. The women were the great power among the clans (*gentes*), as everywhere else. They did not hesitate, when occasion required, 'to knock off the horns' as it was technically called, from the head of a chief, and send him back to the ranks of the warriors.¹³

This text by a missionary, Arthur Wright, quoted by Engels, relates of the customs of the Iroquois. He could have saved Engels from an error of interpretation of a cohesive matriarchy based on the idea of a primitive state of promiscuous intercourse; for he shows that the woman owes her social rank and her esteem exclusively to the structure of the society which allows her to play a leading economic

rôle. It is unfortunately that this 'economic' factor should have escaped a Marxist.

The existence of the 'blue families' of Ireland is an illustration of what has just been stated. The necessary conditions having been realised we can see a matriarchy rise before our eyes in modern times, independent of race.

'When the husband, on the other hand, is a stranger, having no family in Ireland, the small family which he founds is incorporated into his wife's family: it is called the "blue family" (*glas-fine*), because the husband is considered to have come from across the sea; it is then said that the "marriage" belongs to the man and the "property" to the woman.'¹⁴

The immigrant who leaves his country, his 'clan' so to speak, is thus at a disadvantage although the patrilineal system is in vigour in Ireland.

The system of inheritance is consequently subordinated to that of descent. In the matriarchal system, in its purest form, a child does not inherit from his father: he inherits from his maternal uncle and is married to his uncle's daughter, so that the latter is not completely disinherited. All political rights are transmitted by the mother, and except for the possibility of usurpation of power no prince can succeed to a throne if his mother is not a princess. The importance of the uncle on the mother's side lies in the fact that it is he who aids his sister, is her representative everywhere and, if need be, takes her defence. This rôle of aid to the woman did not originally fall to the husband, who was considered to be a stranger to his wife's family. This conception is diametrically opposed to that of the Indo-European. The uncle, in certain African languages, means someone who has the right to sell (implying: his nephew); that is to ransom himself by giving his nephew in his place. Hence the definition of nephew, in the same language: he who can serve for ransom, who one sells to liberate himself from the bonds of slavery.

In Walaf, a language spoken in Senegal, the following terminology exists:

Na Diây = one who sells = uncle

Djar bâr = to be worth a ransom = nephew

That these customs were general throughout Africa is vouched for in a study by Delafosse:

Moreover, this does not prevent the rôle of head of a family being filled by a man, although it is sometimes occupied by a woman: but among the peoples who do only admit of female consanguinity, the head of the family is the blood brother of the mother. Among the other peoples, it is the father....

In reality, nowhere among the black peoples is the woman considered to belong to the husband's family; she continues to belong to her own family after marriage, but she is separated temporarily from it for the benefit of her husband and consequently for the benefit of the latter's family. This is why the custom universally acknowledged in Black Africa, makes exigent, for there to be a valid and regular union, the payment of an indemnity by the family of the husband-to-be to that of his wife, as compensation for the wrong caused to the latter family by the taking away of one of its members. There is no purchase of the woman by her husband, as has been wrongly alleged, since the wife does not legally cease to belong to her own family and in no way becomes the chattel of the man she has married; there is simply the payment of an indemnity or, more exactly, of a bond, which moreover varies enormously with different countries and with the status of the future couple ranging from several hundreds of pounds to an object which is only worth a few pence; in the latter case, it is only the fulfilment of a simple formality required out of respect to traditional customs.¹⁵

Among the Southern societies all that relates to the mother is sacred; her authority is so to speak, unlimited. She can choose, for example, a partner for her own child without previously consulting the interested party. This custom, which is linked with agricultural life, exists likewise among the Iroquois.

...In general, whether among the American Indians or other peoples (at the same stage), the conclusion of a marriage is the affair, not of the two parties concerned, who are often not consulted at all, but of their mothers. Two persons entirely unknown to each other are often thus engaged: they only learn that the bargain has been struck when the time for marrying approaches. Before the wedding the bridegroom gives presents to the bride's gentile relatives (to those on the mother's side, therefore, not to the father and his relations) which are regarded as gift payments in return for the girl. The marriage is still terminable at the desire of either partner...¹⁶

Any oath invoking a mother must be fulfilled under penalty of one's debasement: in the beginning, the most sacred were those which were pronounced with the arm stretched above the mother's head. Her curse destroys irredeemably her child's future: this is the greatest misfortune that could happen and one to be avoided at all costs. An African who has received part of his education at a Western university (who should be free from this superstition) is hardly affected by a curse flung at him by his father; it would be quite different if this came from his mother's lips. Every society of Black Africa is convinced of the idea that the destiny of a child depends solely on its mother and, in particular, on the labour which the latter will provide in the matrimonial home; thus it is not rare to see women quietly putting up with unfairness on the part of their husbands, from the conviction that the greatest benefit for their children will result from it. It must be understood by this that the children will be given every opportunity to succeed in any of their undertakings and that they will be spared from 'bad luck' and misfortune of all sorts, that they will be successful and not social failures. A precise sociological concept corresponds to this idea in the African mind: thus in Walof one finds the expression:

N'Day dju liguèy = a mother who worked.

Ethnologists and sociologists have tried to base the matriarchy disclosed among the Southern societies on the ideas of the latter on the question of heredity. They do not, strictly speaking, hold, as do Bachofen, Morgan and Engels, that the uncertainty which reigns in paternity is due to a primitive state of promiscuous intercourse; in their case, the primitive is not incapable of recognising the rôle of the man in the conception of children: there is no doubt at all of the participation of the father, *but the social structure does not permit his identification with conception and this would appear to be the sole reason that descent would be, at first, matrilineal.*

To ethnologists and sociologists, the 'primitive' cannot raise himself to an understanding of the 'abstract' idea of the father's participation. The rôle of the father is more tenuous, more difficult for the human mind to grasp; its conception requires a maturity and a logic which are in the primitive mentality. It can thus be seen by what expedients these specialists come to adopt the same scale of

values as Bachofen; the superiority of patriarchy is open to no doubt and its spirituality contrasts strongly with the materiality of the earliest ages. There is, therefore, a universal evolution, transition from an inferior to a superior state.

It is unfortunate that this theory could only have been formulated after the study of Oceanian societies made by the ethnologists and sociologists previously mentioned: the very ones whose works were criticised by Van Gennep (cf. p. 25). In fact, if it is desired that a problem of the social sciences remain unsolved, it is sufficient to pose it by starting with Oceania. The dispersion of habitable lands throughout the Pacific Ocean and their small size for the most part, the migrations whose directions crossed and recrossed the number of races which have come into contact with each other, have lived side by side, been superimposed one on the other or have fused with each other, all combine to give, to what is called by convenience the Oceanian continent, an aspect whose irregularity stands in the way of the solution of every human problem.

The phenomenon of regression and degeneration born of such a state of affairs can only further confuse the mind of the researcher. It would have been important to pursue these researches in another 'backward' continent, Africa or America, where the native benefits from a more substantial basis of resistance to external factors.

It seems rather, that in so-called primitive societies, the native had never doubted the participation of the father and mother, but that he did not assign to each the same degree of importance. In the particular case of Black Africa, it is almost everywhere thought that a child owes more from a biological point of view to his mother than to the father. The biological heredity on the mother's side is stronger and more important than the heredity on the father's side. Consequently, a child is wholly that which its mother is and only half of what its father is. Here is an example taken from African beliefs which illustrates this idea.

In Senegal, as in Uganda and in Central Africa, a being is believed to exist among other human beings who should properly be called 'magician-eater-of-men' to distinguish him from the traditional doctor mentioned in the work of ethnologists. Only the first, in the eyes of Africans, deserves the name of magician; the second is only the possessor of a secret science of which he is very jealous and which

he only reveals at the time of initiation to those who merit it, either because the society confers this right on them (age-groups) or because they are his personal followers. The first is gifted with a supernatural power, thanks to which he can transform himself into all sorts of animals to frighten his victim, generally at night, and thus chase the 'active principle' from his body (*fit* in Walaf). As soon as the victim, who is considered to be dead, has been buried, the magician goes to the grave, exhumes the victim, brings it back to life and really kills it in order to devour the flesh, as he would ordinarily butcher meat. This magician is supposed to have a pair of eyes at the back of his head, in addition to his normal ones, which rend it unnecessary for him to turn his head. He possesses extra mouths with powerful teeth at his elbows and knee joints. He has the power to fly in the air by expelling fire from under his armpits or from his mouth. He can easily see the entrails of his table-companions and the marrow of their bones; he can see their blood circulate and their hearts beat; he has the strange power of a being of the fourth dimension who could take away one of our bones without breaking our skin; in fact our body is only hermetically sealed or protected by nature in the three dimensions of our normal spatial existence. If there existed a being having the sense of a fourth dimension, who could live beside us, he could in reality see our entrails and could, thanks to this fourth dimension, whose existence escapes our detection and with respect to which we are open, take away one of our bones without breaking our skin. When one of these magicians is identified and beaten by the people for having been responsible for the death of a victim, the magician has the power to dissociate his being: to keep in his body his 'vital principle', to remove his 'active principle' which is linked to sensibility and to pain, and to rest it on some neighbouring object. From this moment on he can no longer feel the blows, until such time as the new 'object-bearer' of his 'active principle' is discovered and beaten in turn. In a like manner he possesses a mediumistic power. This detailed description of the supernatural powers of the magician aims at throwing better into belief the ideas which Africans have on patrilineal and matrilineal heredity. It is only possible to become a magician gifted with all the qualities thus described, that is to say a 'total magician', if one is the child of a mother who is a magician of the same degree; it is of little importance what the father is. If

the mother is gifted with no power at all and if the father is a total magician (*demmm* in Walaf) the child is only half one; he is *nohor*. He possesses none of the positive qualities of a magician, but only the passive ones.

He will be incapable of killing a victim to feed upon his flesh, which is the principal quality of the *demmm*. In contrast, he can, of course, contemplate in a passive manner, the entrails of his table-companions.

It can be seen here that the participation of the father in the conception of a child is not at all in doubt, nor is one unaware of it, but that it is secondary and less operative than that of the mother. While it is known that the father does supply something, the identity of the child and the mother is a matter of conviction.

These ideas, by their very nature, go back to the very earliest days of African mentality; they are thus archaic and constitute, at the present time, a sort of fossilization in the field of current ideas. They form a whole which cannot be considered as the logical continuation of a previous and more primitive state, where a matrilineal heritage would have ruled exclusively.

ANCESTOR WORSHIP

It is within the framework of sedentary life that the existence of the tomb can be justified. Thus it is impossible to find any trace of the practice of cremation in an agricultural land such as Africa from antiquity to the present day. All of the cases mentioned are unauthentic; they are only the suppositions of researchers in whose minds the demarcation between the two cradles is not clear and who, referring to the Northern cradle, tend to identify any trace of fire as a vestige of cremation, even when no religious objects can be found nearby. The practice of cremation was also unknown in ancient Egypt.

Everywhere where the practice of cremation is found – whether in America or in India – it is possible to discern an Indo-European element which came from the Eurasian steppes. The formation of pre-Columbian America cannot be explained without introducing a nomadic element which entered by way of the Bering Strait; this is the theory generally acknowledged and it permits an explanation of the funeral rite superimposed on the practice of burial among the

American Indians. In Mexico the chiefs, that is to say, the ruling class, were cremated while the mass of the people were buried. This seems to attest to a victory by conquering nomads from the North, perhaps of Mongol origin, over a sedentary agricultural population.

The fact that the expression used to name the pirogue or dugout canoe, that is to say, the sole element which could serve to link Africa and America, is the same in several African languages (*lothio* in Walaf) and in certain Indian languages of Pre-Columbian America, seems to prove that there were maritime links across the Atlantic between the two continents. There would thus have been, in this instance as well, two peoples of different origins living side by side; one of Southern origin, the other from the North. Tombs constitute the dwelling places of ancestors after death. There, libations and offerings are brought; there one prays. When it is desired to increase one's chances in daily life, concerning some precise event, a visit is paid to the tomb of one's ancestors. Hence the expression in Walaf: *ver-seg* = to visit the cemeteries = luck.

But nowhere in Africa does there exist this multitude of domestic altars surmounted by sacred fires which must be kept burning as long as the family exists, a custom which seems to stem directly from the Northern worship of fire.

Such are the general views which can be set over against the system constructed by Bachofen on the basis of the traces of a matriarchy discovered in classical antiquity – traces which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. However, we can wonder if, to the arguments mentioned earlier to prove the existence of matriarchy among the Southern peoples, it would not be wise to add a further argument dealing with the cycle of plant life. In fact, it is known to be certain that with the discovery of agriculture the earth appeared as a goddess periodically made fertile by the sky, by means of the rain which fell. From this moment the rôle of the sky is finished and it is the earth who nurtures the seeds implanted in her bosom; she gives birth to vegetation. Hence the chthonian-agrarian triad: sky-earth-vegetation. In certain countries, such as Egypt, this eventually became identified as a triad of demi-gods: Osiris-Isis-Horus. It could have helped to form the ideas of the Southern peoples relative to biological heredity such as it has been described above. These, in

turn, could have reacted upon the existing matriarchal conceptions by reinforcing them.

CRITICISM OF THE THEORIES OF MORGAN AND ENGELS

In the theory of Morgan, we shall call attention to two precise ideas which are the basis of the system.

On the one hand, the systems of consanguinity which allowed him to reconstitute the history of the family do not correspond to the interpretation that he gives of them; they reflect purely and simply the social relations of the peoples among whom they are in force.

On the other hand, he has clearly brought out the sociological significance of the totemic clan based on matriarchy, but he has been unable to establish the logical connection in consanguinity permitting the transition from matriarchy to patriarchy, and the affirmation of the universality of the process leading from the one to the other. Now as long as this demonstration has not been made, one may rightly suppose, in the light of all that has gone before, that it is a question of two irreducible systems, each adapted to their reciprocal environments and born of that dialectical relationship which links man with nature.

Neither does Engels explain this process any more clearly:

...As to how and when this revolution took place among civilized peoples, we have no knowledge. It falls entirely within prehistoric times. But that it did take place is more than sufficiently proved by the abundant traces of mother-right which have been collected, particularly by Bachofen. How easily it is accomplished can be seen in a whole series of American Indian tribes, where it has only recently taken place and is still taking place under the influence, partly of increasing wealth and a changed mode of life (transference from forest to prairie), and partly of the moral pressure of civilization and missionaries...¹⁷

In the following chapters it will be seen that one must distinguish the evolution of a particular people which under the influence of exterior factors changes its system of consanguinity without changing its material conditions of life. In this quotation from Engels it

will be seen that the process in question is merely postulated, but that its existence has not been demonstrated.

It is necessary to underline the fact that the historical basis of the different forms of the family is not in any doubt and that they do constantly develop; it is almost as certain, also, that the group marriage mentioned by Engels and Morgan did exist, but this was neither at the origin of the 'system of consanguinity' of Morgan, nor at the origin of matrilineal descent.

with a recent law
In all forms of group family it is uncertain who is the father of a child; but it is certain who its mother is. Though she calls all the children of the whole family her children and has a mother's duties towards them, she nevertheless knows her own children from the others. It is therefore clear that in so far as group marriage prevails, descent can only be proved on the mother's side and that therefore only the female line is recognised. And this is in fact the case among all peoples in the period of savagery or in the lower stage of barbarism. It is the second great merit of Bachofen that he was the first to make this discovery...¹⁸

The assumption on which the system is built – as can be seen from the above and previous quotations – is that all the gradations of objective consanguinity are, primitively, expressed in speech. The latter can only register the ties which actually existed at a given moment. But then it is not comprehensible why in the case of group marriage the mother, knowing perfectly well that the other children are not hers, should nevertheless call them her own children. Here speech intentionally plays false with reality and does not express a real relationship, but a social one; and the fact is all the more serious in that this kind of falsification due to society goes back to the earliest period, that of the '*lower stage of barbarism*'. Thus from the very beginning society introduces, insidiously, the grounds for error and the system, whose objectivity would seem guaranteed, is vitiated at its foundations. The system requires in its elaboration, first, that all the mothers be confounded and rendered common to all the children, to justify a way of addressing them: the aunt is then called mother by her sister's children. It then requires, in a second operation, that these mothers be distinguished to account for the matrilineal descent.

The contradiction inherent in these foundations has not been

surmounted in the correct way, but has been stifled and crushed by the theoretical structure. It seems rather that the system of consanguinity, whose discovery by Morgan appeared to be so important, is only an expression of purely social relationships. If it were otherwise, one could ask oneself why the system has not survived in the form of vestiges, however small, in the Northern cradle, among the prototypes of the Indo-Europeans whose mythological traditions and history we knew with certainty (Greeks, Romans and Germans). As far as we can go back into the Indo-European past, even so far back as the Eurasian steppes, there is only to be found the patrilineal genos with the system of consanguinity which at the present day still characterizes their descendants.

It is difficult to maintain that at the period of the steppes the Indo-Europeans were already too evolved to preserve the system of consanguinity found among the American Indians in Africa or in India, that they had already passed the *lower stage of Barbarism* and that in consequence they were destined to discard this system of consanguinity even to its smallest traces. One could then ask how it was able to continue to exist among the builders of the empires of Black Africa: the empire of Ghana lasted from the third century to 1240, thus preceding by 500 years the empire of Charlemagne; it subdued the Berbers of Andaghost who payed tribute to it. The social and political organisation which reigned there will be described in the following chapters. Its renown extended as far as Asia. Now, the system of consanguinity which existed in Ghana and still does today among the Sarakolle, the descendants of the emperors, is the same as that described by Morgan, although they had been converted to the Moslem faith. Ghana, in 1240, gave way to the empire of Mali about which Delafosse wrote:

However, Gao had recovered its independence between the death of Gongo-Moussa and the coming of Soliman, and, about a century later, the Mandingo empire (Mali) was beginning to decline under the attack of Songay, though it still possessed enough power and prestige for its sovereign to be treated on equal terms with the king of Portugal, then at the height of his glory.¹⁹

The Iroquois system of Morgan has equally well survived – and still does – among the Mandingos of Mali, even though it had already

disappeared among the Indo-Europeans of the steppes who had attained 'the upper stage of barbarism', after which it is no longer supposed to exist, the next stage being civilization.

It turns out from what has been said before, that this system ought not to be linked with a more or less historically primitive stage or with the degree of evolution of societies. It is characteristic that it is only to be found with any degree of certainty among the Southern and agricultural populations (Black Africa, the Deccan, Melanesia and Pre-Columbian America). It is known that the population of America came from elsewhere since no traces of early human skeletons have been found there.* Therefore it is not universal and it can only be considered to be so if the gaps are filled by assumptions. It seems evident that, like matriarchy, it arises from a system of political and social organisation, from a sedentary and agricultural way of life, irreducible to the type of Northern nomadic life.

As has been said above, this system has only a social significance. What a Walaf or another African calls his father's brother, father, or his mother's sister, mother, he knows that they will serve as his real parents in case of death, illness or extinction. The structure of African society – such as it will be described later – necessitates this assimilation of aunts and uncles with real parents. There springs from this a collection of reciprocal obligations, which Delafosse did not fail to point out:

In addition, it can rightly be said that there are no orphans among the blacks. It could also be added that neither are there any widows, or at least, any widows exposed to misery, since a widow returns to her own family, which is responsible for her as long as she does not remarry, unless she forms part of the heir of the latter.²⁰

In reality a shade of meaning is often introduced to underline the fact that the real fathers and mothers are not put in question. A Walaf will always call his father's brother *Bay-bu-ndav* = little father. In the same way he will say *Yay-dju-ndav* = little mother. These expressions have only a social value for him.*

* For further elaboration on this, see Ivan Van Sertima: *They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in America* (Random House, 1976).

* They signify 'secondary' parents.

It is characteristic that Morgan was never able to point out any coincidence between his system of consanguinity and the real relationship which exists in the families where he found the system. Among the Iroquois any correspondance to the Pairing family is missing: it is in Hawaii and in Polynesia in the so-called *punaluan* family, that Morgan finds the type which corresponds to the Iroquois system of consanguinity.

But now comes a strange thing. Once again, the system of consanguinity in force in Hawaii did not correspond to the actual form of the Hawaiian family...²¹

This contradiction is explained by saying that the family continues to develop, while the language spoken ossifies and is oustripped by reality:

...While the family undergoes living changes, the system of consanguinity ossifies; while the system survives by force of custom, the family outgrows it...²²

It may then be asked why it has been impossible to find a similar phenomenon of ossification, revealed by language, in the Indo-European system of consanguinity over a period of 4,000 years.

The sacred character of the mother in the societies which are sedentary, agricultural and matriarchal is ill-suited to the idea of a primitive stage of promiscuous intercourse which they are said to have passed through. Wherever this latter has existed, it seems to have led directly to amazonism, which must not be confused with matriarchy: this distinction will be made later.

The easiness of divorce in marriages of matriarchal origin can not objectively be considered as a sign of its inferiority or priority, to the point of distinguishing the ancient Pairing family from the monogamous family, where divorce is virtually impossible. Facility of separation must not be considered as a revelation of mores which have undergone disintegration, but as an index of the degree of freedom which a society grants to all its members, without distinction of sex.

The African woman, even after marriage, retains all her

individuality and her legal rights; she continues to bear the name of her family, in contrast to the Indo-European woman who loses hers to take on that of her husband.

Such are the outstanding traits of the two régimes: matriarchy and patriarchy. Their exclusive characters, as far as consanguinity and the right of inheritance are concerned, reveal a conscious systematic choice and not an impossibility of choice arising from the uncertainty of any given paternity. It has been shown that these things still occur under our own eyes, in both cradles and with full knowledge of the facts. It is not therefore logical to imagine a qualitative leap which would explain the transition from one to the other. It seems more scientific to consider the two systems as irreducible; but if this is so, one must be able to prove it by rapidly retracing the general history of the two cradles and their zones of influence. This will be the object of Chapter III.

Piganiol, in his work on the origin of Rome, is categorical: it was the Indo-European nomads of the Eurasian steppes, the Celts, Germans, Slavs, Achaeans and Latins who introduced cremation and the worship of fire to the Mediterranean. The agricultural peoples who lived in this region practised burial. Also, it is not rare to find the two rites among mixed people such as the Pelasgians. He criticises the view of Fustel de Coulanges that all ancient institutions were derived from ancestor worship, and he is thus led to see in the two rites of burial and cremation two different conceptions of the beyond. It will be seen below how difficult it is to uphold this point of view.

According to Fustel de Coulanges, all the institutions of the ancient city are connected with ancestor worship. Now the ancients were divided into two peoples: those who buried their dead and those who cremated them. Have we not the right to wonder if the different practices were not inspired by different beliefs, if those who cremated their dead, and those who buried them, did not conceive in different ways the relation between the dead and the living? The problem is posed in the same terms in Italy and in Greece: the Umbrians, who cremated their dead, subdued the Ligurians, who buried theirs, in the same way as the Achaeans, again cremators, subdued the Minoans, who practised burial....

It was the invaders from Eastern and Central Europe who

introduced the rite of cremation into the Mediterranean world and to Western Europe: Umbrians, Aechaeans, Celts – these are the same peoples who brought the Indo-European languages. From the persistence of the rite of burial can be measured the resistance of the Mediterranean basin....

The Pelasgians, who are a mixed people, practised both rites. An immensely precious legend makes us understand the perplexities of conscience at this time. Pollis and Delphos established in Crete a mixed colony of Tyrrhenian Pelasgians and Laconians; the colonists, after a period of uncertainty, divided into two groups: one faithful to the Minoan tradition and one which practised the new gospel.

The first colonists of Albi practised cremation; this is affirmed by the upper stratum of tombs of the forum: legends say that Numa refused to be cremated. The Sabine rite would perhaps have triumphed had it not been for the Umbrian-Etruscan invasion at the end of the sixth century...

Between the two rites cases of contamination are frequent...

So, although at this period of history cremations and burial were practised simultaneously, both these customs were derived from the practices of two distinct worlds: the pastoral world of the North, which burnt its dead, and the agricultural world of the South, which buried them.²³

We agree entirely with this conclusion, which is one of the fundamental ideas of our own theory. The nomadic origin of cremation and the sedentary, agricultural origin of burial could not be emphasized more clearly. But contrary to the opinion of Piganiol, we think that the question is not one of two different beliefs about life after death, but of the same religious thought – ancestor worship – differently interpreted by the nomads and the sedentary peoples respectively.

The author has not tried to discover the material cause which prevented the nomads from consecrating their worship to fixed tombs; he would have realised that cremation was the only means for a people with no fixed dwelling place to carry the ashes of their ancestors and to worship them. He would seem to have agreed with Fustel de Coulanges who talks of ancestor worship in the ancient world, without insisting too much on its two variations.

Tombs and statues are meaningless in a nomadic life; their absence is explained logically, instead of being an expression of

particular intellectual inclinations. Thus, instead of believing that it is material conditions which imposed two different forms on the same religious idea, Piganiol maintains that we are dealing with two fundamentally distinct conceptions.

These rites seem to correspond to two differing beliefs regarding life beyond the grave....

The man who practises burial lives in a constant state of terror, whereas the man who believes in cremation reminds one of a free thinker. These beliefs, which are so distinct, do not allow of a common formula; the same institutional systems could not be derived from each of them. Has the assumption of Fustel de Coulanges not already been shaken? To tell the truth, to confirm our conclusions would require a close study of comparative religions. Let us observe at once that there is to be found in the Rig-Veda this Aechaean or Homeric free thought, such as Rhodes was able to restore it. The Brahman laughs at ghosts; cremation entrusts the dead to Agni so that he may carry them to the world of their ancestors, and the urns are simply left somewhere in a wood, most of the time without any funeral monument. Among the Jews it seems indeed that there are to be found both types of belief which we have defined... We think we should have a satisfactory answer to this if it were admitted that the Canaanites practised ancestor worship, according to rites analogous to Chthonian ones and that the nomadic Israelites introduced if not cremation, at least different customs regarding the dead, analogous to the Aechaean or Brahman indifference towards their dead.²⁴

The contrast between the Canaanites, leading a sedentary and agricultural life, and the Israelite nomads, is exactly the one which we have made; it confirms the theory which has been developed as to the zone of confluence of the two cradles. But the point of view of Piganiol regarding the Northern and Southern religions must be completely set down before it is criticised.

To the school of English philologists we owe an interpretation of the Greek religion which is very subtle, very tempting and widely disputed. The Greek religion, according to this theory, was born of the fusion of Chthonian and Uranian cults. The Uranians, the gods of manifest will, are the objects of a *tsrapsia*; they are honoured in

the expectation of a future benefit. The Chtonians on the contrary are evil spirits which the cult aims at warding off....

The struggle between these two religions corresponds to the war between the Pelasgians and the Northern invaders, whose fusion produced classical Greece...contrast between the Northern fire worship and Mediterranean stone worship.

The peoples who worship the heavens have in their minds the idea of a kinship between the fire in their hearths, the atmosphere and the sun. By means of fire, the offerings which are burnt are scattered across the ether which is identical with the great god who is dispersed everywhere; and this invisible god condenses and becomes tangible in the flames. The earth worshippers communicate with their gods by bringing their offerings to caves, by throwing them into abysses or by letting them slowly sink into swamps....

A tradition exists that the worship of fire which was entrusted by Romulus to some priests, passed later to the priestesses according to the will of Numa, the Sabine....

It was the nomadic invaders, pastoral tribes, who introduced the worship of fire. Sacrifice by fire was unknown in Athens before the time of Cecrops, who was also the first to give the title of Almighty to Zeus.

The peoples who introduced fire worship into the Mediterranean basin strove at the same time to eradicate savage superstitions.²⁵

This last opinion is certainly exaggerated. After the triumph of the Northern elements, during the classical age of Rome, there were more gods than there were citizens: Fustel de Coulanges was careful to enumerate them precisely. The text quoted clearly reflects the persistent tendency among many Western writers to exalt the superior qualities of everything which is Northern. In fact there is to be found again the classical contrast between the religion of the caves and swamps and that of the manifest will of the heavens.

It must be said, first of all, that nothing is more doubtful than the attribution of a heavenly or solar religion to the Indo-Europeans to the exclusion of all other peoples. It is much more likely that such a religion would be the prerogative of the South, where the sun shines brightly and where the sky is really clear. It is in the Mediterranean and not in the Northern sky that a Zeus, god of light, should reign.

Several arguments permit us to justify this view. Ra is indeed a solar god of the South. On the other hand, Grenier is led to record

the absence of a solar divinity in the Roman religion, which seems to him unexpected to say the least, after all the thought he has given to the etymology of Zeus; but with regard to this, we must again refer to the written word to understand that it is extremely doubtful and open to discussion.

The sun and moon governed the Roman calendar; the names Sol and Luna however, did not appear in it. The Sol Indiges of Rome, which had his temple on the Quirinal, was a god of Lavinium: Luna had a temple which was erected by Servius Tullius on the Aventine, but the Roman Empire and foreign influences had to come into being before their worship was developed. They are probably represented in the former Roman religion by names under which they have not yet been recognised.²⁶

In so far as the Roman calendar is an adaptation of the Egyptian calendar it is not surprising that the terms sun and moon are to be found therein. In spite of the fact he had just established – that of the absence of a solar divinity among the Romans – Grenier is still able to write, but, let it be said, without too much conviction:

In general, the gods of heaven are Indo-European; those of the earth, on the contrary, the gods of the underworld and the caves, represent the avatars of Mother Earth, the great primitive Mediterranean divinity: Uranian worship on the one hand, Chthonian on the other.²⁷

In reality, Grenier summarised all that is known to be most certain about the Northern beliefs; that is, their decaying character. There is a poverty of religious thought. Documents pertaining thereto are rare and comparatively recent.

The oldest record we possess referring to the Indo-Aryan religion, the poems of the Rig-Veda, only date from the sixth century B.C. The Greek religion, such as we find it in Homer, allows us to go back a little further, but this religion appears to have a strong admixture of elements foreign to the Indo-European world. The religions of the Celts and Germans are only known to us from the period nearest to our own times. The information we possess about the ancient religions of the Lithuanians and Slavs scarcely goes back

before the sixteenth century A.D., due entirely to the priests who taught them Christianity. It is only by a comparison of these very different indications that a deduction can be made of the religions of the Indo-Europeans before they were split up about 2,000 B.C.²⁸

It follows from this comparative study that fire worship was common to all the Indo-Aryans up to the time of the Prusso-Lithuanians of the sixteenth century.

To the leading Brahmins must be given rice at the same time as other presents, in the area sacred to the fire-offering.²⁹

To all the reasons which have been invoked to explain fire worship, the one which has already been put forward is to be preferred; in the icy northern cold, the god benefactor *par excellence* is the fire; thanks to its incomparable usefulness in these latitudes, the primitive northern soul was not long in coming to its worship. This would be the material base, which subsequently gave birth to a religious superstructure. It is evident from the study of Piganiol, of Grenier and of the *Lois de Manou* that cremation and fire worship arise from a specifically Indo-European tradition, a tradition which has perpetuated itself until the present day in the consciousness of men who have forgotten its origin; the everlasting flame, the Olympic torches, the associations whose members, although Christians, allow themselves to be cremated, can probably be explained in the light of this Aryan tradition. It is likely that certain Europeans would not allow themselves to be cremated today, even for reasons of hygiene, were it not for this tradition handed down from their Aryan ancestors. It is remarkable to observe that cremation is the ethnological and cultural trait which distinguishes the Aryan world from the southern world, and in particular from the African one. It is impossible to identify a single authentic case of cremation in Black Africa, from antiquity until the present day. This is a fact which has never sufficiently been stressed.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF PATRIARCHY AND MATRIARCHY

The Southern Cradle, the Northern Cradle and the Zone of Confluence

Properly speaking, there is no question here of summarising, even briefly, the history of the three 'cradles' since this would scarcely offer any interest for the purpose we have in mind. The method which will be applied consists of choosing in each cradle, the outstanding historical facts, whose nature is such to prove that a particular cradle is indeed characteristic of such and such a system.

THE SOUTHERN CRADLE

The study will be limited to Africa, to limit the bounds of the subject to cogent facts. In fact, Africa is the Southern continent which has been the least changed by exterior influences. The Arab penetration was stopped by the forests to the South, because of the tsetse fly which killed most of their horses; the first expeditions to reach the heart of Africa, those of Livingstone and Stanley, came later than 1850.

ETHIOPIA

We shall deal with Ethiopia as it was described by Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus. Its capital, Meroë, situated near the junction of the White and Blue Nile was discovered by Cailliaud at the time of the Restoration. Its placement corresponds approximately to that of present day Sudan; it was also called Nubia and the Land of Sennar. The Ethiopia of today, whose capital is Addis-Ababa, was only an outlying province.

Ethiopia was the first country in the world to have been ruled by a queen – after Egypt of the eighteenth dynasty and Queen Hatshepsout, whose reign will be studied in Chapter VI. There was first the semi-legendary Queen of Sheba, contemporary of Solomon, the King of the Hebrews, about the year 1000 B.C. There are very few records in existence bearing on her life and reign. A brief passage in the Bible tells us that she paid a visit to Solomon, whose wisdom had been highly praised to her, and that she brought him many presents; the visit was of short duration, of scarcely a few days, and the Queen returned to her country laden with gifts offered to her by Solomon. No historical record can be found which supports the existence of her marriage to Solomon and the Bible makes no reference to this. Historians sometimes wonder if she really reigned in Ethiopia proper, or in Arabia Felix, which would be the true land of Sheba. But until the birth of Mohammed, Southern Arabia was inseparable from Ethiopia, their historical destiny was the same and the sovereignty of Ethiopia over Arabia was scarcely interrupted except from time to time; this can be affirmed by a verse of the Koran entitled 'The Elephants'. Mohammed relates how the Ethiopian army, which was sent from Africa to suppress a revolt by the Yemenite Arabs against the Ethiopian Governor Abraha, was destroyed by the 'Messengers of Heaven', though it was 40,000 men strong. Each soldier was hit at the top of his helmet by a miraculous missile which went through and through him and his mount. It is commonly supposed that the Ethiopian army must have been destroyed by a sand-storm or an epidemic or plague which had broken out en route. It thus appears according to the limited historical records we possess that the Queen of Sheba was connected more with Ethiopia than with 'Sheban Arabia'.

However that may be, it is worthy of note that during the first thousand years before our time, that is to say at a time situated between the Trojan War and Homer, the Southern lands could still be ruled by women.

The reign of Queen Candace was really historic. She was a contemporary of Augustus Caesar when he was at the height of his power. The latter, after having conquered Egypt, drove his armies across the Nubian desert to the frontiers of Ethiopia. According to Strabo, they were commanded by the General Petronius. The Queen herself

took command of her army; at the head of her troops she charged the Roman soldiers, as Joan of Arc was later to do against the English army. The loss of any eye in battle only had the effect of increasing her bravery. This heroic resistance made a great impression on all classic antiquity, not because the Queen was Black, but because she was a woman: the Indo-European world was still not accustomed to the idea of a woman playing a political and social rôle.

Strabo reports that Augustus Caesar who was relaxing on a Mediterranean island, Rhodes, gave complete satisfaction to the demands of the delegation sent to him by the Queen. This glorious resistance has remained in the memory of the Sudanese: the prestige of Candace was such that all later queens have borne the same generic name.

Herodotus says that the macrobian Ethiopians are the tallest and most handsome of all men. They are gifted with perfect health; by applying to them the expression macrobian, he is referring to their longevity. Their King was chosen from the strongest. The abundance of their food resources is symbolised by what Herodotus and legend call the 'Table of the Sun'; at night, the messengers of the King placed discreetly a quantity of well-cooked meat on a lawn reserved for the purpose. At sunrise, any of the people could profit from the food provided freely and anonymously. Prisoners were secured by golden chains. The material reasons which kept the Ethiopians in their birthplace and prevented them from becoming conquerors can be understood. In fact – still according to Herodotus – when Cambyses conquered Egypt (525 B.C.) he wished to cross the Nubian desert but nearly lost his life there. He then sent '*ichthyophagous*' Ethiopians to spy on the King; the latter exposed the plot and through his representatives, lectured Cambyses in the following terms:

'...The King of the Ethiops thus advises the king of the Persians – when the Persians can pull a bow of this strength thus easily, then let him come with an army of superior strength against the long-lived Ethiopians – till then let him thank the gods that they have not put it into the heart of the sons of the Ethiops to covet countries which do not belong to them.'

According to the same author the respect of individuality was such that when a Nubian was condemned to death he was ordered to destroy himself alone at his own house. If then he tried to leave

the country secretly, Herodotus says that it was his own mother who watched over him and took upon herself the duty of putting him to death before he could carry out his plan. Certainly the condemnation would be justified by a crime against humanity and society and that is the reason which forced the mother to destroy her son – it was never the father, who does not seem to have had this right.

All these tales, more or less semi-legendary, reported by Herodotus, are only important in so far as they reflect, after all, the manners and customs in force in the country, at the time of the author. If this were not so, they could not have been invented out of nothing.

EGYPT

This is one of the African countries where matriarchy was most manifest and most lasting. It has been determined, in fact, by means of astronomical calculations of mathematical precision, that in 4241 B.C. a calendar was in use in Egypt. That is to say that the Egyptians had acquired enough theoretical and practical scientific knowledge to invent a calendar whose periodicity was 1,461 years. This is the interval of time separating two heliacal risings of Sothis or Sirius; every 1,461 years Sirius and the Sun rise simultaneously in the latitude of Memphis. It is probable that this figure was fixed by calculation rather than by experiment, that is to say, by observation. It is difficult to imagine, in fact, that forty-eight generations would bequeath their observations of the heavens so that at the end of the stated period, at a precise dawning, the forty-eighth generation could prepare itself to witness the heliacal rising of Sothis. This would also assume the existence of written astronomical archives, of precise chronology at a period considered as prehistoric. Be that as it may, the myth of Isis and Osiris precedes this time, since it dates from the origin of Egyptian history. From this distant period – and to the end of Egyptian history – marriage between brother and sister existed in the royal family, Isis and Osiris being, at one and the same time, man and wife and brother and sister. During this lengthy period, unique in history, by its duration, Egypt must have known all the refinements of civilisation, and must have instructed all the younger peoples of the Mediterranean, without its own social structure ceasing to be essentially matriarchal. It is therefore possible

to be legitimately surprised that there was no transition from matriarchy to patriarchy.

The agrarian and matriarchal character of the Egyptian society of the Pharaohs is amply explained in the myth of Isis and Osiris. According to Frazer, Osiris is the god of corn, the spirit of the trees, the god of fertility:

The examination of the myth and the ritual of Osiris which precedes, can suffice to prove that, under one of his aspects, the god was a personification of corn, about which it can be said that it dies and returns to life each year. Through all the pomp and glory with which the priests later invested his worship, the conception of Osiris as the god of corn is shown clearly by the feast of his death and resurrection which is celebrated in the month of Khoniak and at a later date, in the month of Athyr. This feast appears to have been essentially a feast of sowing, which fell just at the date when the peasant committed the grains to the earth. On this occasion an effigy of the god of corn, made of earth and corn was buried with full funeral rites; it was hoped that, in dying there, he would be able to return to life with the new harvest. The ceremony was, in fact, a spell designed to make the corn shoot forth by sympathetic magic.¹

The author then describes the ceremony which identifies Osiris with a tree: in the interior of a pine tree which had been hollowed out is placed the body of Osiris modelled in wood. The author thinks that this is doubtless the ritual counterpart of the legendary discovery of the body of Osiris found shut up in a tree. He goes on to describe the Feast of Djed, which finished on the thirteenth Khoiak by the erection of a pillar which was nothing but a tree with its branches cut off; this erection would symbolise the resurrection of Osiris, since in Egyptian theology the pillar was regarded as being the vertebral column of Osiris.

Isis, according to Frazer, was originally the goddess of fertility. And indeed there exist many reasons which prove this judgement. She is the great and bountiful Mother-Goddess, whose influence and love rule everywhere, among the living as well as among the dead. She is, like Osiris, the goddess of corn, the cultivation of which she is said to have invented:

Isis must surely have been the goddess of corn. Indeed there exist many reasons which tend to prove this assertion. Diodorus Siculus, whose authority appears to have been the historian Manetho, attributes to Isis the discovery of corn and barley; stalks of these cereals were carried in procession on her feast days to commemorate the gift she gave to mankind. St. Augustine adds another detail: Isis discovered barley at the moment when she was offering a sacrifice to the ancestors of her husband, who were equally hers and who had all been kings; she showed the newly discovered heads to Osiris and her adviser, Thot (or Mercury as he was called by the Roman writers). That is why, adds St. Augustine, Isis and Ceres are identified with each other.²

There is here to be found some confirmation, by legend, of the tradition which attributes to women the active rôle in the discovery of agriculture.

At the time of the harvests the Egyptian indulged in lamentations in honour of the spirit of the corn which had been reaped, that is to say, in honour of Isis the creator of all green things, the Lady of bread, the Lady of beer, the Mistress of abundance, personifying the field of corn. Frazer sees the proof of this identification in the epithet *Sochit* given to Isis which still signifies, in Coptic, a field of corn.

The Greeks identified her in the same way with Demeter and considered her with the goddess of corn. It is she who gave birth to the 'fruits of the earth'.

The foundation of the Mystery of Isis and Osiris is therefore, in essence, agrarian life.

In the beginning, monogamy was the general rule, since Osiris had only one wife, Isis, whose name is an alteration of the Egyptian expression *Sait* or *Sit*. It is interesting to note, in passing, that these two words in an African language, Walaf, mean 'the newly wed', the bride.

Seth, the brother of Osiris, was also monogamous, his wife - who was also his sister - is Nephtys.

Up until the end of Egyptian history, the people remained monogamous. Only the royal family and the court dignitaries practised polygamy, in varying degrees, depending on their wealth. This appeared to be a luxury grafted on to family and social life, instead

of being the primordial foundation of it. It existed in Egypt, as it did in Greece at the time of Agamemnon, in Asia and among the Germanic aristocracy of the age of Tacitus; examples could also be cited from the royal courts of the West in modern times.

Marriage with a sister is a consequence of matrilineal law. It has already been seen that under an agricultural régime, the pivot of society is woman: all rights, political and otherwise, are transmitted by her, for she is the stable element, man being relatively mobile: he can travel, emigrate, etc., while the woman raises and feeds the children. It is normal therefore, that these latter owe everything to her and not to the man who, even in sedentary life, retains a certain nomadism. To begin with, in every clan it was to the female element – and to her alone – that the bulk of any heritage was left. It seems that the need of avoiding quarrels about succession rights between cousins – that is to say, between the sons of brothers and sisters – had led these, within the framework of the royal family, to perpetuate the example of the first couple, Isis and Osiris. Imagine a brother and a sister descended from a royal couple, who marry outside their own family, with another prince and princess. In accordance with matrilineal law, only the child of the sister can reign over the country; the child of the brother will reign in the country of its mother, if matrilineal law is in force there; if this is not the case, he will have no throne unless he usurps it in one country or the other. In marrying their sisters, the pharaohs kept the throne in the same family and at the same time eliminated disputes about the succession.

The pharaoh who marries his sister is, at the same time, his son's uncle. Now, under the matrilineal régime, only the nephew inherits from his maternal uncle and the latter has the right of life and death over him. In contrast, his own sons do not inherit from him and he, himself, does not belong to his wife's family. All these inconveniences are eliminated thanks to what has been called 'royal incest'. This is the only example of a meridional family of the matrilineal type, in which both the man and woman belonged to the same family; it is a specific type within matriarchy itself and is accounted for by the overriding interest of the nation and the cohesion of the royal family. It affords also a glimpse of the possibility of an explanation of the case of Queen Hatshepsout, which will be given in Chapter IV.

On marriage, the man brought a dowry to the woman. The latter,

during the entire history of the Egypt of the pharaohs, enjoyed complete freedom, as opposed to the condition of the segregated Indo-European woman of the classical periods, whether she was Greek or Roman.

No evidence can be found either in literature or in historical records – Egyptian or otherwise – relating to the systematic ill-treatment of Egyptian women by their men. They were respected and went about freely and unveiled, unlike certain Asian women. Affection for one's mother and especially the respect with which it was necessary to surround her were the most sacred of duties; this is recorded in a very well-known Egyptian text:

When you were born she (your mother) made herself really your slave; the most menial tasks did not dishearten her to the point of making her say: why do I need to do this? When you went to school for your lessons, she sat near your master, bringing every day the bread and the beer of the household. And now that you are grown up, that you are marrying and founding, in turn, a family, always remember the care your mother devoted to you, so that she has nothing for which she can reproach you and does not raise her arms to God in malediction, for God would answer her prayers.

This advice given to a young Egyptian can be contrasted with the conduct of Telemachus in giving orders to Penelope, his mother, and acting as the real master of the house in the absence of Ulysses, or with that of Orestes in killing his mother, Clytemnestra, in order to avenge his father.

LIBYA

Whatever the peopling of Libya was in prehistoric times, from the second millenium and in all probability about the year 1500 B.C., the Western region of the Nile delta was invaded by Indo-Europeans, tall, blond, blue-eyed, their bodies covered by tattoos and clothed in animal skins. This is how they are described in documents found by Champollion at Biban-el-Molouk. Champollion, after having described the different races of men known to the Egyptians such as he had seen them depicted on the bas-reliefs of the tomb of Ousirei the First, coming to the last race depicted, writes:

Finally, the last one has skin-colouring that we would call flesh-coloured or white of the most delicate shade, a straight or slightly arched nose, blue eyes, a blond or red beard, a tall and very slim stature and is dressed in the skins of oxen which still retain their hair, a veritable savage tattooed on different parts of his body; such men are called the Tambou.

I hastened to look for the painting corresponding to this one on other royal tombs and finding it in fact on several, the variations which I there observed convinced me that it had been desired to show here the inhabitants of the four parts of the world according to the ancient Egyptian system, that is to say: (1) the inhabitants of Egypt who themselves formed one part of the world according to the very modest practice of an old people; (2) the real inhabitants of Africa, the Blacks; (3) the Asians; (4) lastly (and I am ashamed to say so, since our own race is the last and most savage of the series) the Europeans who, in these distant times, it must be admitted did not show themselves to great advantage in this world. It must be understood that reference here is made to all the people of the blond race with white skins, living not only in Europe, but in Asia where they originated. This way of considering these pictures is all the more true, since in other tombs, the same generic names reappear, constantly in the same order...

It is the same with our good ancestors, the Tambou; their costume is sometimes different; their heads are more or less covered with hair and adorned in various ways and their savage clothing varies a little in its form; but their white colour, their eyes and their beards preserve all the character of a separate race. I have made copies, in colour, of this curious ethnographic series. I certainly did not expect, on arriving at Biban-el-Molouk, to find sculptures which would serve as vignettes of the history of the primitive inhabitants of Europe, should one ever have the courage to undertake this. The sight of these has, however, something flattering and consoling, since it does make us appreciate the long way we have travelled since that time.³

These were the nomadic tribes, called also 'peoples of the sea' in Egyptian records, who installed themselves around Lake Tritonis and became the Lebou or Rebou or Libyans. They were also called sometimes Tehe nou; these expressions are not of Indo-European origin: it can be noted that *Rebou* = hunting country in Walaf (a language of Senegal), and that *Reb* = hunter: in the same African language, *Tahanou* = the country where the dead wood is found.

The Libyans often formed hostile coalitions directed against Egypt; the most important was promoted under Merneptah, at the time of the nineteenth dynasty.

Towards the month of April in the year 1222, Merneptah learnt in Memphis that the King of the Libyans, Meryey, was arriving from the country of Tehenou with his archers and a coalition of 'peoples of the North' composed of Shardans, Sicilians, Achaeans, Lycians and Etruscans, bringing the elite of the warriors of each country; his aim was to attack the western frontier of Egypt, in the plains of Perir. The danger was all the more serious, since the province of Palestine had itself been assailed by unrest; it seems sure that the Hittites had been brought into the struggle, although Merneptah had continued to do them service, in sending them corn in his ships at a time of famine, so that the country of Khati could continue to live... The battle lasted six hours, during which time the archers of Egypt slaughtered the barbarians: Meryey fled as fast as he could, abandoning his arms, his treasure and his harem; there were listed among the dead 6,359 Libyans, 222 Sicilians, 742 Etruscans and Shardans and Achaeans by the thousands; more than 9,000 swords and other arms, together with a large amount of booty were captured on the field of battle. Merneptah engraved a victory hymn on his tombstone at Thebes where he described the dismay of his enemies: among the Libyans, the young people when talking to each other concerning victories, said, 'We have had none since the time of Ra', and the old men said to their sons, 'Alas, poor Libya! The Tehenou have been destroyed in one single year'. All the other outlying provinces of Egypt were at the same time restored to obedience. Tehenou was devastated, Khati, pacified; Canaan was pillaged, Ascalon despoiled, Gaza seized, Yanoem annihilated, Israel desolated and left without grain, and Kharou left like a helpless widow against the might of Egypt. All the countries were unified and pacified.⁴

For a long time after this defeat the Libyans ceased to be a danger to the Egyptians, in so far as they had no fast mounts other than mules.

A thousand years after their arrival in Africa, they were still nomads. Herodotus describes how they were scattered around Lake Tritonis in Cyrenaica and as far as the outskirts of Carthage. From Egypt towards the Atlantic they are met in the following order: the *Adyrmarchidae* are the first; through prolonged contact with Egypt,

they were influenced in their manners and customs; then come the *Giligamae* who occupied a territory extending as far as Aphrodisias Island; next the *Asbystae* who lived beyond Cyr  n  ; they lived in the interior of the country and were separated from the sea by the *Cyrenaeans* and travelled in chariots drawn by four horses; then the *Auschisae* who lived beyond Barca: they occupied a stretch of the coastland in the neighbourhood of the Evesperides and towards the centre of their land lived the *Cabalians*; these were followed by the *Nasamonians*.

‘It is their custom to have several wives for each man, but they have their wives in common, almost like the Massagetes.’

Then come the *Psylli* who were completely destroyed under mysterious circumstances, perhaps by some natural phenomenon like a sand storm, according to Herodotus. Beyond the *Nasamonians* and slightly to the South can be found the *Garamantians*:

...who avoid all society or intercourse with their fellow-men, have no weapon of war, and do not know how to defend themselves.⁶

The Macae occupy a stretch of the coast and after them come the Gindanes who live beside the *Lotophagi*. Following these come the *Machlyans* who cover the area as far as the River Triton; this river flows into lake Tritonis. Herodotus also mentioned the *Auseans* who, knowing nothing of marriage, had all women in common, the *Ammonians* and the *Atlantes*

Such was the demographic condition of Libya, from Egypt to Mount Atlas, in the fifth century B.C. If this recital of facts by Herodotus has been scrupulously respected, it is because in Chapter IV when we are discussing the Amazons, supposedly African, it will be seen their place of origin was precisely that of the Northern Libyans. The latter being Indo-Europeans who had migrated from the ‘Northern cradle’ and remained nomads, had never practised matriarchy.

BLACK AFRICA

The history of Black Africa is known, without any break in continuity,

from the Empire of Ghana (in the third century A.D.) until the present day, at least as far as the Northern part of the country is concerned. Probably in prehistoric times, this was populated by folk coming from South Africa and the region of the Great Lakes. Indeed no trace of the paleolithic is found in West Africa; the only place where it has been found with certainty is at Pita in Guinea; South of the Sahara, in general only the Neolithic is to be found, while in the Sahara itself are to be found all the periods of prehistory.

One has therefore been led to suppose that, after the drying up of the Sahara, which had been terminated by 7000 B.C., the primitive population must have migrated in part towards the valley of the Nile, where they met other groups coming probably from the Great Lakes. These people formed, for a long time, a sort of cluster along the valley; then because of over-population and invasion by others, they moved once again towards the heart of the continent, driving before them the Pygmies. This is what all the legends from the oral traditions of the present day Africans seem to confirm; and according to these legends, the ancestors of the Blacks came from the East, from beside the 'Great Water'. Biblical tradition and the first archaeological discoveries impelled scientists to situate the birth-place of humanity in Asia. It was therefore logical to try to people the rest of the world by starting with the continent of Asia, where the pithecanthropus of Java and the Sinanthropus of China were exhumed. The theory of the Lemurian continent were born: the African Blacks are descended from the Australians, the route of migration being the Indian Ocean, the different islands serving as stopping-off places for the canoeists.

Recent discoveries, which tend to prove that the cradle of humanity is East African, render the Lemurian hypothesis less and less necessary.

The toponymy and the ethnonymy of Africa reveal a common cradle which appears in fact to be the valley of the Nile. Linguistics supplies an almost certain proof of this.

The empire of Ghana seems, historically, to be a transition between antiquity and the present day. As a matter of fact, in the Tarikh-es-Soudan, the town of Koukia, on the Niger not far from Gao, has been in existence since the days of the pharaohs. The ruins of Ghana to the northwest of the mouth of the Niger were discovered by Bonnel

de Mézières and Desplagnes. The history of Ghana is known to us in broad outline, thanks to the works of Arab writers. Ibn-Khaldoun, born in Tunisia in 1332, in his *History of the Berbers* gives particulars of the Black empires of Africa and of the migration from North to South of the white races. Ibn-Haoukal of Baghdad who lived in the tenth century was a travelling merchant who made many notes about the countries he passed through; to him, we owe *The Routes and the Kingdoms*. El Bekri, an Arab geographer born in Spain in 1302, supplied much information about the economic life of Ghana. Ibn Batouta, born in Tangiers in 1302, visited the empire of Mali in 1352 and 1353 during the Hundred Years War: he went to Timbuktu, Gao, Oualata and Mali, the capital of the empire which succeeded that of Ghana in 1240; he wrote *Voyage to the Sudan*.

The information supplied by these various authors tells us, among other things, that in Ghana, descent was matrilineal, in particular in the case of succession to the throne. The royal dynasty was that of the Sarakolle Cisse. Historians sometimes claim – but without being able to rely on written evidence – that the dynasty of the Cisse was preceded by a dynasty of the white Semitic race of which certain princes ruled before Mohammed; there is said to have been a line of forty-four kings, before power passed to the Cisse. Two remarks can be made here.

On the one hand, it is forgotten that, before Mohammed and Islam, the Arabs had no potential of expansion and that, just at this period, it was a Black State, such as the Sudan (Meroë), which ruled over Arabia; it cannot therefore be explained, how a political force could rise in the Yemen, which was capable of carving out such a vast empire at the time. On the other hand, the Semites practised patrilineal descent and it was their customs which would have governed the succession to the throne of Ghana, if they were, in fact, in power at its beginning.

It was only in 710, under the leadership of Akba ben Nafi that the Arabs reached Morocco and the Atlantic. It is true that there is an account of a tribe of nomadic Arabs, the Berabich, who in the first century A.D. are supposed to have left the Yemen, to go to Tripolitania, which they left in the second century to go to the south of Morocco. The tribe is said to have stayed there, side by side with the Messoufa Berbers, until the eighth century. Then, under pressure

from the Mohammedan Arabs, they moved into the desert and, from that time on, served as a link between North Africa and Black Africa in the region of Timbuktu. It was not until the seventeenth century that they were converted to Islam by the Kounta Arabs.

The Kounta and the Beni Hassan are two Arab tribes which entered North Africa only in the fifteenth century: they formed part of the people who occupied Mauritania.

It can thus be seen that Arab penetration into Black Africa is relatively recent and would not, in any event, provide an explanation of the matriarchal régime in Ghana.

Matrarchy ruled, in a similar manner, in the empire of Mali, among the Malinke. Ibn Batouta confirms this; he noted this custom as being one peculiar to the Black world and the opposite of what he was accustomed to see everywhere else in the world, except in India among other Black peoples.

They (the Blacks) are named after their maternal uncles and not after their fathers; it is not the sons who inherit from their fathers, but the nephews, the sons of the father's sister. I have never met this last custom anywhere else, except among the infidels of Malabar, in India.⁷

With the coming of Islam, that is to say, under the influence of an exterior factor, and not by an internal evolution, most of the people who in the Middle Ages were matrilineal became patrilineal, at least in appearance.

The Arab writers who have told us of Ghana and of Mandiga (Mali) in the Middle Ages have drawn our attention to the fact that, in these states, the succession was transmitted, not from father to son, but from brother to uterine brother, or uncle to nephew (son of sister). According to native traditions it was the Bambara who first, in the Sudan, broke with this practice and it is from this that they derive their name – Ban-Ba-ra or Ban-ma-na meaning separation from the mother – while those among the Ouangara who remained faithful to the old custom, received the name of *Manding* or *Mande* – *Ma-nding* or *M-nde* meaning 'mother child'. In our times male kinship or consanguinity persists among the Bambara and has gained the upper hand among the Sarakolle and among part of the Mandingos or Malinke;

but many of these latter still only acknowledge female or uterine consanguinity as conferring the right of heritage, and it is the same among most of the Pelus (Peul) and the Sereres and among a large number of the Black peoples of the Sudan, the coast of Guinea and of Africa south of the Equator.⁸

The Islamisation of West Africa began with the Almoravidia movement in the tenth century. It can be emphasized that it introduced a sort of dividing line in the evolution of religious consciousness, first of the princes, and as a result, among the people. The traditional religion withered away little by little under the influence of Islam, as did the mores and customs. This is how the patrilineal régime, gradually and progressively became substituted for the matrilineal régime, from the tenth century onwards. The exterior reasons which led to this change can thus be grasped.

In West Africa, the adoption of the father's name for the children seems to stem from this same Arabic influence; as a matter of fact, we have just learnt from Ibn Batouta that in 1253, children took the name of their maternal uncle, that is to say, their mother's brother: the children did indeed take the name of a man, but the régime was purely matrilineal; it only ceased to be so from the time when, according to Islamic custom, the name of the father was substituted for that of the uncle.

It is important to note that, beginning with the same period, detribalisation was an accomplished fact in West Africa; this is proved by the possibility of an individual bearing his own family name and not the name of a clan. In regions of the continent which are not detribalised, individuals have only a first name; when their proper name is asked for, they reply that they belong to such a totemic clan, whose name can only be borne collectively. It is only when the members of the clan are dispersed that they could retain as individuals, in memory of their primitive community, the name of the clan, which could then become their own family name.

It is, however, necessary to stress a particular fashion of naming a child which seems to proceed from a dualist conception of social life. To the boy's name is added that of the mother and to the daughter's name that of the father; for instance: Cheikh Fatma means the son of Fatma, Magatte Massamba-Sassoun is the daughter of

Massamba-Sassoun. It is certain that this does not come from Arabic influence.

African matriarchy existed on a continent-wide scale:

The bearing of a son toward his mother among the Swazi (who live in Southern Africa) is a combination of deference and affection. To him, swearing, undressing, or conducting himself in an immodest manner in her presence, brings about, it is believed, direct punishment by ancestors; he will also be publicly rebuked and can be forced by the family council to pay a fine. It is expected that his mother will scold him, should he neglect his duties as a son, a husband or a father, and he must not reply to her angrily. The accent is always on the mother proper 'the mother who bore me'. Her hut is *keftu* - our house.⁹

Consanguinity among the Tswana, who live in Bechuanaland in South Africa, is also matrilineal.

The maternal relatives are not involved as a rule in the situations we have just described. They cannot be rivals in property or social position and most often 'although this is not absolutely general', they belong to another community in the vicinity. They are, in consequence, well-known to be more affectionate and devoted than the agnates. The children, when they are small, are often sent for some time to the home of their mother's relatives, who later on encourage them to come frequently to visit them. There, a warm reception and generous hospitality are reserved for them and they profit from numerous advantages. A child has a place in the home of his mother's kin, says the proverb. A maternal uncle allied to him must, in particular, be consulted in every case specially concerning the children of his sister; his opinion is so important that sometimes at the moment when a marriage is being arranged, his veto can be decisive... It is from his maternal uncle, more perhaps than from any other person, that a man expects disinterested advice and assistance in case of need... The relatives and sisters of the mother are commonly recognised as being more kindly and more indulgent than those of the father.¹⁰

Among the Ashanti of Ghana, descent is also matrilineal.

The Ashanti consider the bond between mother and child as

the keystone of all social relations... They consider it as a moral relationship which is absolutely binding. An Ashanti woman will not stint in the work she does or the sacrifices she makes for her children. It is specially to feed, clothe and educate them today, that she works so hard, annoys her husband and jealously watches her brother, to make sure that he carries out faithfully his duties as the child's legal guardian. No demand is too exaggerated for a mother to meet. Although she shrinks from inflicting punishment and never disowns her child, an Ashanti mother requires from her children both obedience and affectionate respect... To show disrespect to a mother is equivalent to committing a sacrilege.¹¹

Matriarchy also governs the social organisation of the Bantu of Central Africa.

Most of the Bantu people of Central Africa determine descent in the matrilineal rather than in the patrilineal line, and many of them practise among themselves a certain form of what is generally known under the name of matrilocal marriage. Indeed, it is this matrilineal character of the family organisation which distinguishes them so clearly from the Bantu of Eastern or Southern Africa and it is for this reason that the territory stretching from the west and centre of the Belgian Congo to the north-east of Northern Rhodesia and the mountains of Nyasaland is sometimes known as the 'matrilineal belt'¹²

It is clear from this statement that the matriarchal régime existed generally in Africa, in ancient times as well as at the present day, and that this cultural feature does not result from an ignorance of the rôle of the father in the conception of the child. The phallic cult, which is a corollary of the agrarian régime (raised stones, the obelisks of Egypt, the temples of Southern India) is ample proof of this; it shows that at the time when ancient humanity chose the system of matrilineal descent, it knew the rôle of the father in fecundation. In none of the systems described in the Southern cradle is patrilineal consanguinity systematically neglected. On the contrary social conduct regarding patrilineal relatives is stricter than that regarding matrilineal relatives. With the latter, one behaves freely and easily without social hypocrisy; it is different with the former, since appearances must always be safeguarded. A maternal brother or half-

brother can be left on the battlefield, but never a paternal half-brother, although he is less loved than the former, and one is more distant from him. He is a social rival, who must be outdone or at least equalled in everything, to do honour; within the bounds of polygamy, to the 'dwelling' of his mother, that is to say, to his line, his motherland.

THE NORTHERN CRADLE

The geographic area which will be studied here comprises the Eurasian steppes (the civilisation of the Tumuli), Germany, Greece, Rome and Crete. Actually, Crete already appears as a zone of transition in the open sea, between the South and the North. Taking into account the priority of its civilisation, it is by the study of the latter that it is preferable to open this chapter.

CRETE

What is known of the Cretan civilisation? According to Thucydides, the Cretans established a maritime supremacy over the whole of the Aegean region of the Mediterranean.

...And the first person known to us by tradition as having established a navy is Minos. He made himself master of what is now called the Hellenic sea, and ruled over the Cyclades, into most of which he established the first colonies, expelling the Carians and appointing his own sons governors; and thus did his best to put down piracy in those waters, a necessary step to secure the revenues for his own use....

With respect to their towns, later on, at an era of increased facilities of navigation and a greater supply of capital, we find the shores becoming the site of walled towns...¹³

Nothing further is known of Crete until Schliemann in 1876, and Evans in 1900, carried out excavations on the scene of the deeds described by Homer. Schliemann was not a professional, but a self-taught genius; he was thus, in one sense, less handicapped in his efforts than if he had had a classical background. After being successful in business and making a great deal of money, he dedicated himself

to science and to the study of ancient languages, the better to devote himself to archaeology. Taking the works of the ancients (Homer, Aeschylus, Euripides, Sophocles) literally, he discovered the location of ancient towns like Troy, Mycenae, and Tyrins. He carried out his excavations and succeeded in transforming the sub-foundations of a palace which he thought to be that of Priam. He found at Mycenae the '*treasure of Atreus*', and at Tiryns a palace, the walls of which were covered with frescoes. It occurred to him to compare the ceramic objects found in these last two cities. By their style, they all came, so to speak, from the same factory. Vases with a geometric design existed in Egypt at the time of Thothmes III (eighteenth dynasty). At Mycenae he also unearthed an ostrich egg, which very probably came from Africa. One of the frescoes of the palace of Tiryns represented the struggle of a man with a bull. Schliemann had not the time to excavate in Crete and so could not have realised that this scene was typical of Cretan art. However, he felt, on the basis of these signs, that formerly the same civilisation – whose centre was this island – originating in Africa or Asia, had extended throughout the Eastern Mediterranean.

It was Sir Evans to whom it fell to prove the existence of the Aegean civilisation, in unearthing the Palace of Minos at Knossos. Thus the tradition related by Thucydides was confirmed: Crete was indeed the centre of a maritime empire, whose continental towns were its colonies. Through trade it had relations with the Southern world and, in particular, since prehistoric times, with Egypt. Indeed according to Capart, the gerzean statues, with their triangular heads, characteristic of the end of the prehistoric period in Egypt, are very widespread in Crete.

The colonisation of Attica is symbolised by the legend of Theseus; every year, the Athenians had to send, by way of tribute, seven boys and seven girls, to the Palace of Minos at Knossos. In the labyrinth of the palace lived a monster with the head of a bull and the body of a man: the Minotaur, who was supposed to devour the young Athenians. Theseus liberated the town of his birth by killing the Minotaur, with the help of Ariadne, the daughter of Minos. This legend bears witness to the state of servitude in which Attica found itself with regard to Crete.

It can be supposed that, under Cretan domination, cultural

influences spread from South to North, perhaps from Egypt. In Crete a matriarchal régime was in force, as in Egypt. The Cretan called his native land his motherland¹⁴; but where did he himself come from? It is known that he was neither Indo-European, Semitic nor of the Mongolian race; he was small and brown and must have belonged to a race which was mixed from a very early time. The latter was surely not native to Crete, which was a desert region at the time of the Paleolithic. The race which inhabited it must have come from some or other continent; but given its undeniable matriarchy, it can be inferred that it came from an agricultural milieu. The Cretan thalassocracy lasted approximately a thousand years (2500 to 1500 B.C.); its influence therefore had time to be implanted on the Mediterranean; it may be that the matriarchy of the first aboriginal populations of Attica is due partially to Crete.

The causes of the sudden collapse of the Aegean civilisation are still being examined. Evans, who made its discovery, thought that it was necessary to put forward a natural phenomenon, such as an earthquake, as an explanation. On examining the ruins of the palace of Minos he was able to find traces of a destruction, so violent and sudden, that it could only be compared with that of Pompeii; the victims had no time to realise the cause of their death. No invasion by 'peoples from the sea' could have had such immediate effects. It was after having witnessed an earthquake on the Island that Evans had this idea.

However, it is remarkable that the destruction of the Minoan civilisation coincided with the period of the great invasions of the Indo-Europeans: it was towards 1500 B.C. that the Southern cradle was invaded and partly submerged by the nomadic peoples who came from the Eurasian steppes.

GREECE

Historically, Greece began to exist after the destruction of the Cretan civilisation. The Achaeans, an Indo-European tribe, were the people responsible, as is shown by André Aymard. The author stresses the Cretan influence on Achaean society which became enriched materially and spiritually, thanks to the wealth and to the 'teachers' captured in Crete:

'Nevertheless, the Achaeans, excellent warriors who used horses harnessed to their chariots, full of fresh and exuberant energy and drawn by the richness of their teachers, finished by attacking the latter. Towards 1400 B.C., the palace of Knossos was completely destroyed and was not to rise again... in the civilisation which then developed, especially at Mycenae – from whence its traditional name – and at Tiryns, the Cretan influence seems to have remained strong. In pillaging the island, leaving it with a reduced standard of living, the Achaeans had taken its treasures, its artists and its workers in order to embellish their own material existence; but the presence of these objects and these men could not remain without consequence on the moral domain, notably in the matter of religion.'¹⁵

Towards this period – in the middle of the second millenium – Greece must have known, in addition to the influence of Crete, that of the Egyptians and the Phoenicians.

It is at this moment that the Phoenicians, symbolised by Cadmus, took over the rôle of the Cretans at sea; they introduced the alphabet and founded the oracle of Dodona, considered to be the oldest cultural centre in Greece.

'The following tale is commonly told in Egypt concerning the oracle of Dodona in Greece, and that of Ammon in Libya. My informants on the point were the priests of Jupiter at Thebes. They said that 'two of the sacred women were once carried off from Thebes by the Phoenicians, and that the story went that one of them was sold into Libya, and the other into Greece, and these women were the first founders of the oracles in the two countries.' On my enquiring how they came to know so exactly what became of the women, they answered that 'diligent search had been made after them at the time, but that it had not been found possible to discover where they were'; afterwards, however, they received the information which they had given me.

This was what I heard from the priests at Thebes; at Dodona, however, the women who deliver the oracles relate the matter as follows: 'Two black doves flew away from Egyptian Thebes, and while one directed its flight to Libya, the other came to them. She alighted on an oak and sitting there began to speak with a human voice, and told them that on the spot where she was, there should thenceforth be an oracle of Jove'...¹⁶

According to Herodotus, almost all the gods of Greece were of Egyptian origin. It is also from the Egyptians that the Pelasgians must have learnt to accredit their divinities with certain attributes. The foundation of the oracle of Dodona, which we have just mentioned, dates from that period.

Almost all the names of the gods came into Greece from Egypt. My inquiries prove that they were all derived from a foreign source, and my opinion is that Egypt furnished the greatest number. For with the exception of Neptune and the Dioscūri, whom I mentioned above, and Juno, Vesta, Themis, the Graces and the Nereids, the other gods have been known from time immemorial in Egypt. This I assert on the authority of the Egyptians themselves. The gods, with whose names they profess themselves unacquainted, the Greeks received, I believe, from the Pelasgi, except Neptune...

Besides these which have been here mentioned, there are many other practices whereof I shall speak hereafter, which the Greeks have borrowed from Egypt...

In early times the Pelasgi, as I know by information which I got at Dodona, offered sacrifices of all kinds, and prayed to the gods, but had no distinct names or appellations from them, since they had never heard of any. They called them gods (disposers), because they had disposed and arranged all things in such a beautiful order. After a long lapse of time the names of the gods came to Greece from Egypt, and the Pelasgi learnt them, only as yet they knew nothing of Bacchus, of whom they first heard at a much later date. Not long after the arrival of the names they sent to consult the oracle at Dodona about them. This is the most ancient oracle in Greece, and at that time there was no other...¹⁷

The reign of Cecrops, a legendary king of Egyptian origin, is generally situated at this time period of the Pelasgians. It is he who is said to have introduced into Greece the practices of the South – agriculture – and even, it seems, the custom of marriage. Matriarchy of the primitive peoples of the peninsula bears his name. Although we are dealing with a legend, we could not insist too much on this triple correlation: it was a king from the South who introduced agriculture and its corollary, matriarchy. The later struggle of the Greeks to reject these Southern cultural values is described exactly in a legend, which relates facts dating from the reign of Cecrops.

I would draw your attention to a tale by Varron which has been preserved for us by St. Augustine (*De Civitate Dei*, 18,9). In the reign of Cecrops occurred a double wonder. At one and the same moment an olive tree sprang from the ground and in another spot, a spring. The king, frightened, sent to the oracle of Delphi to ask what this meant, and what must be done in similar occurrences. The god replied that the olive tree signified Minerva and the spring Neptune, and that it was the duty of the citizens to name their town after one of the two signs and after one of the two divinities. Thereupon Cecrops assembled all the citizens, the women as well as the men, since at this time it was usual for women to participate in public deliberations. Then, the men voted for Neptune, the women, for Minerva; and since there was one woman more, it was Minerva who won. Neptune, thus rebuffed, became incensed and the sea rose and covered the lands of the Athenians. To appease the anger of the god, the citizens were forced to inflict three punishments on their wives; they had to lose their right to vote; their children would no longer be called by their mother's name; the women themselves would no longer have the right to be called Athenians (after the name of the goddess). St. Augustine adds the following thought: as the personification of the women who were punished, Minerva, who was at first the victor, was eventually beaten. She abandoned so completely her friends who had given her their votes that they not only lost their right to vote and that of calling their children by the mother's name, but they could no longer even call themselves Athenians and could no longer bear the name of the goddess who, thanks to their vote, had triumphed over the male divinity.¹⁸

This text, as explicit as that of the *Creteia* of Aeschylus, marks, as does the latter, the dividing line in Greece between the period when the cultural values of the South played a prominent part and that when they gave way to those of the North. It is typical that every mention of a matriarchy at the time of the Aegean period is linked with a Southern factor.

Several facts seem to attest to this ancient extension towards the North of the values of the agricultural cradle. These have been especially enumerated and analysed in a study by Louis Benloew:

On the other hand it has been maintained on several occasions and with a certain persistence that the findings have still not justified

the fact that Greece was colonised by immigrants who came from Egypt. Fréret tried to identify Inachus with Enak and Pharaoh with Phorone. Io, the daughter of Inachus, assumes several of the traits of the goddess Isis. The resemblance between these names seems plausible, but it is insufficient to carry any real conviction to the mind. The tradition, according to which Cecrops and Danaus came from Egypt is no more certain. It has been claimed that Cecrops introduced agriculture into Attica, arboriculture (especially the cultivation of the olive) and the institution of marriage! Philochorus went so far as to affirm that under Cecrops, there were 20,000 people in Athens...

...It was Plato in his *Timaeus* who, following traditions of the Egyptian priests, stated that Athens had been very closely related to the land of Egypt, and notably with Sais...

According to Greek mythology, Libya was the mother of Belos and Danaüs and Egyptos were sons of the latter. These legendary facts only prove the ancient and close relations which seem to have united from earliest antiquity Mizraim, Sem and Javan. It is not at all unlikely that at the period when the Hyksos occupied the valley of the Nile, the Egyptians, guided by the Phoenicians, could have tried to colonise some parts of the Peloponnesus. In Pausanias, there is more than one relic and more than one name which makes one think of ancient Egypt...

...Herodotus relates that the Danaïdes taught the women of Argos to celebrate the Thesmophories of Demeter, feasts whose ceremony specially refers to married life...

...After all, it matters little to us whether the Egyptians did or did not found a colony on the shores of the Greek peninsula. What we would like to prove is that Greek soil had not been occupied in the most ancient times solely by people coming from the Northern regions, but that the East and the South had furnished their share of colonists with swarthy complexions. Our task will be easy if it is granted that the proper names which are met in the mythology of ancient peoples are other than empty words. Now it is their complexion which gave their name to the Ethiopians, of whom the Greeks recognised two types, those who lived in the Far East and those who lived in the West, that is to say in Libya (perhaps also in Nubia). Did they penetrate into Greece and did they intermix with the inhabitants of that country?¹⁹

The author shows that Danaüs had a wife named Ethiopis and a daughter Celeno, whose name means *Black*. He shows that a

daughter of Atlas also bore the same name. Celeno had a son by Neptune called Celenus. A second Celenus, son of Phlyos, is the basis for the ancient legendary cults of the Peloponnesus. Perseus, the king of Argos, had a grandson Celenus. Celena was also the daughter of Proteus, the king of Tiryns, who had a gigantic citadel built for himself by the Lycians. The goddess Diana of Attica was an Ethiopian; she was worshipped at Brauron and it was Apollo who took her away from Ethiopia; elsewhere she was known as the Ethiopian. She had altars in Lydia and in Euboea, two countries which were formerly called Ethiopia. Helanis was the form name of the town of Eritrea in Euboea; it is said to have been founded by Meleneë. A Black Venus was worshipped at Corinth. These Melanian names are also widely scattered in the Peloponnesus. There is Melanthos, son of Nelee, King of Elis; a district in Sithonia is called Melandia. According to Homer, Proteus left Egypt to settle in Macedonia in the peninsula of Chalcidie. Originally the islands of Samothrace, Lemnos and Lesbos, were known as Ethiopia. According to the same author, Pelops – who gave his name to the Peloponnesus – could mean nothing else than ‘the man with the dark complexion’. At the time of Homer this region was still not known as the Peloponnesus; this expression was only adopted in the seventh century B.C.

The stratification of the population of Greece was the following, according to Benloew:

The first layer, composed of Leleges, mixed perhaps with Phoenician, Libyan and Egyptian colonists, was conquered by the Achaeans, a Northern people who made up the second layer. In turn the Achaeans were conquered by the Dorians (the third layer), also a Northern people. In so far as the matriarchy of the first stratum cannot be denied, neither can the patriarchy of the two others.*

The first population was steeped in a Southern culture which the second was relentless in destroying, to the point that today there remain only scarcely detectable traces.

‘The woman, and this is the point we wish to make, seems to have played a different rôle among the primitive peoples of Greece than among the descendants of Deucalion, with whom they shared the land. In the same way that Demeter and Athena were the objects

* There is a tendency today to consider the Dorian movement as a class struggle.

of a particularly fervent worship by these people, so did the woman not only enjoy a singular esteem, but she appears sometimes to have occupied a rank superior to that of the men in the constitution of the tribe. Seeing in her especially the mother, they considered her as the foundation of the family and of the society and she was given rights and prerogatives which, in our society, are given to men only.²⁰

Among the primitive populations, those which are the most marked by Southern matriarchy are the Pelasgians, the Leleges, the Zolian Locrians mentioned by Polybius. There have been many references made to the Phoenician influence. Towards the middle of the second millenium (1450 B.C.), under the growing pressure, perhaps, of Indo-European tribes who occupied the hinterland and perhaps also for commercial reasons, the Phoenicians founded their first colonies in Boeotia, to settle there the surplus inhabitants of Sidon. This is how Thebes in Boeotia was created, the choice of whose name confirms the close relationship with Egypt at this time. Indeed it is the name of the sacred capital of Upper Egypt, from where the Phoenicians brought the Black women who founded the oracles of Dodona in Greece and of Ammon in Libya. Cadmus is the personification of the Sidonian age and the Phoenician contribution to Greece: the Greeks said that it was he who introduced writing, in the same way as we would say today that it is Marianne who introduced railways to French West Africa. In the beginning it was the Phoenician colony which was supreme; but there was very soon a struggle for freedom by the Greeks against the Phoenicians who, in this period before the Argonauts, possessed the mastery of the sea and technical superiority. According to Lenormant, this period of conflict is symbolised by the struggle of Cadmus (the Phoenician) against the serpent son of Mars (the Greek); it lasted about three centuries.

The discord aroused among the autochtons by the arrival of the colonists of Cana is represented in mythology by the conflict waged after the arrival of Cadmus by the Spartans, born of the earth. From that time onward, those Spartans said by legend to have survived this struggle who became the Companions of Cadmus, are the representatives of the principal Aeonian families who accepted foreign domination.

Cadmus did not remain very long in peaceful possession of his empire, he was soon driven out and forced to withdraw among the Enchelians. It was the native element which regained the upper hand; after having accepted Phoenician authority and after having received the benefits of civilisation it rose up against them and tried to expel them...

...All that can be detected in this part of the accounts relating to the Cadmeans is the profound horror which their race, foreign as it was, and their religion, still bearing the imprint of all the Eastern barbarity and obscenity inspired in the poor and virtuous Greeks, whose instructors, however, they had been. Thus in Hellenic traditions a superstitious terror is attached to the memory of the kings of the race of Cadmus. It is they who furnish most often the subjects for ancient tradition.²¹

The Canaean influence in Greece was therefore profound; it endured for three centuries through the intermediary of kings who had found collaborators among the population. This influence is even mentioned in the Bible, which speaks of Dodanim, which was none other than the oracle of Dodona:

The tradition of Genesis and that of the Greeks coincide to make of Dodona (in Hebrew, Dodanim) the oldest centre of Greek civilisation. It is curious that in the region where this town is situated one comes across all the names by which the Greeks have been known since their arrival in the country where they were destined to remain.²²

Homer and Hesiod are the poets who have determined the national tradition in Greece. Hesiod was a Boeotian. His theogony is directly inspired by the Phoenician cosmogony, revealed by the fragments of Sanchoniaton, translated by Philo of Byblos and related by Eusebius. Those who think that patriarchy was the basis of the Phoenician social organisation could possibly object; it can be recalled that it is necessary to distinguish between the Phoenicia of the Canaan period and the Palestine of the Jews. The Phoenicians who emigrated from Tyre and founded Carthage were led not by a king but by a queen, Dido. The Canaean, who were a sedentary people practising agriculture and commerce, stemmed from the Southern matriarchal régime and had great cultural affinity with the Egyptians.

All that has just been said shows that only in so far as one disregards the superimposition of the Southern and Northern cultures around the Mediterranean, and in particular in Greece, can one speak of a universal transition from matriarchy to patriarchy, of the ubiquity of all forms of organisation and of human beliefs.

ROME

The historical situation of Rome presents a great likeness to that of Greece, which has just been described: a prior occupation of the land by aboriginal peoples having their own customs, the invasion and destruction of these people by nomadic elements arriving later from the North. However, the possibilities of investigation are singularly limited by the rarity of any written records, as has been underlined by André Aymard.

To begin with it is essential to state precisely the limits of our documentation: its insufficiency is the justification for the cautiousness manifested in the following pages. Both the Greeks and the Romans were interested in the Etruscans, sometimes devoting important works to them. To confine ourselves to two examples, chosen because of the fame of their authors, we see that Aristotle did not neglect to include this people among the hundred and fifty-eight whose 'constitutions' or political institutions he studied in as many monographs; we see also that the enthusiastic scholar, Emperor Claudius, devoted some twenty volumes to the Tyrrhenians. But, as others of the same kind, these systematic treatises have disappeared and of the abundant 'literature' of antiquity concerning this most amazing period of the origins of Italy, there remain today only minute and disconnected fragments.²³

André Aymard surveys the three hypotheses held regarding the origin of the Etruscans. One supposes them to have come from the North across the 'Rhaetian Alps'; another considered them to be aborigines whose civilisation had blossomed forth as the result of a process of internal evolution and also maritime contact with the peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean; the third, which had the most adherents among the ancients, considers them to be invaders who came from Asia Minor after having wandered for a long time about

the Mediterranean, towards the end of the second millennium, following the fall of Troy.

Certain facts seem to imply that the Etruscans were acquainted with matriarchy. They were a sedentary, agricultural people and as such practised a long ritual for tracing the lay-out of towns with their plough shares. It seems that Romulus was inspired by this custom when he founded the city of Rome. They named their children equally after the mother or the father.

There existed, in Etruria, great families and their cohesion as shown by a system of individual appellation, which until then was unknown in the Mediterranean world. Throughout all the East, a man had only been given one name, this being followed by the name of his father, in order to distinguish those with the same name; certain Asian peoples, notably the Lycians, preferred the name of the mother, which has sometimes been interpreted as a mark of a matriarchal régime. Now, if the Etruscans used these two systems, they also used another at the same time or even alone, the name otherwise single in front of a first name placed before a family name. This custom affirms forcefully the continuity of the family and in fact permits, in the case of certain Etruscan families, the establishment of long and complex genealogies.²⁴

It can thus be seen that an Etruscan matriarchy is, to say the least, uncertain. But taking into account its agricultural and sedentary character and the constant contact which the people had with Egypt – the use of the sarcophagus is evidence of this – the practice of matriarchy would not be unlikely. The sarcophagus is the materialisation, to some extent, of the religious idea the Egyptians had regarding immortality. It reflected their hope of conquering the latter: perhaps the notions of life after death and the divinatory practices, which played a large part in the Etruscan religion, had a Southern origin. It is clear that the Etruscans are a much later people than the Egyptians.

If the Etruscans had had an Asian origin, as most ancient writers supposed, and if they had been refugees from Troy, they would have been, according to tradition, the allies of Egypt before the fall of that city, because the current king of Egypt and Ethiopia had sent ten thousand Ethiopians to aid the city of Priam, besieged by the Greeks

led by Agamemnon. In this case the Egyptian influence would precede the Trojan War, which would be not at all unlikely since at an even older period Egypt had already influenced Phoenicia. The Sabines lived at Alba, in the neighbourhood of the Etruscans. The root of their name is not Indo-European and recalls a Southern ethnonymy. According to Fustel de Coulanges, they worshipped the god Consus; an Egyptian god is known which was called Khonsou. In ancient Egyptian, Rome, whose etymological origin is unknown, could be connected with the root Remetou meaning 'the men'. The legend connected with the foundation of the city discloses totemic practices which seem foreign to the Northern cradle.

It is not unlikely that, at the moment when Egyptian influence was spreading in Greece (age of Cecrops) it had also reached the Italian peninsula, then inhabited by aborigines.

This primitive population foundation was completely swept over on the arrival of the true Indo-Europeans: the Latins, representatives of a foreign culture and foreign customs. Here, as in Greece, the discontinuity between old and new inhabitants is evident, and the patriarchy of the latter can not validly be considered as the logical successor to the matriarchy of the former. Once again, it is a question of two irreducible systems being superimposed on each other. The speech of Cato, reported by Titus Livy, in favour of upholding of the Oppian law against feminine extravagance, reveals the patriarchal basis of Latin society:

Our ancestors did not allow the women to handle any business, even domestic, without special authority; they never ceased to keep them dependent on their fathers, their brothers or their husbands. But we, if the gods are willing, will soon allow them to take part in the direction of public affairs, to frequent the forum, to listen to the speeches and meddle in the work of the electoral assemblies... The advantages against whose absence they are protesting today are the least of those of which, to their great displeasure, enjoyment is forbidden by our custom and by our laws... Count the legislative provisions by which our ancestors tried to fetter the independence of women and to make them subject to their husbands; and see how much trouble we have, even with all these legal impediments, to keep them within the bounds of duty. What! If you allow them to break these bonds one after the other, to become free of all dependence

and to be put completely on the same footing as their husbands, do you think it will be possible for them to endure them? They will no sooner be our equals than they will dominate us.²⁵

This passage needs no comment: it is difficult to think that a people which expresses itself in such a manner on the condition of women, through the mouth of one of its greatest political figures, would have known any long-forgotten matriarchy. The quoted passage expresses quite the contrary since it consists especially of recalling the coercive virtues of the ancestors regarding women. In the beginning there had been complete subjection, which only became more flexible in the course of development. At the time when Cato pronounced these words in the Roman forum in the Southern cradle, in Africa, women took part in public life and had the right to vote, they could become queens and enjoyed a legal status equal to that of men. It is impossible to find anything equivalent to this passage in the whole of Egyptian literature from its beginning or in Black African literature, whether this be written or spoken.

GERMANIA

To Caesar and Tacitus we owe the few pieces of information existing about Germania and Gaul. According to these accounts, the Germans were still semi-nomadic and struggled with all their might against definitive settling down. They remain conscious of their pastoral background and knowingly refused to devote themselves to agriculture. In accordance with nomadic customs, cremation was in force. Polygamy was general among the barbarians, according to Tacitus; among the Germans, all those who had the means to do so, that is to say, the aristocracy, practised it. They waged the same type of devastating warfare as the Romans; according to Fustel de Coulanges, the latter did not confine themselves to attacking men but also attacked the surrounding country, the harvest, etc... After their passage, the fields were transformed into uncultivated wastes. It was the same among the Germans.

They never practise agriculture and live principally on milk, cheese and meat. No-one has a portion of land of his own, or of specific

boundaries; but each year, the magistrates and the chiefs assign to the different groupings and to the families who are gathered together, a particular piece of land in a region which is judged to be suitable, and in the following year, they force them to move elsewhere. For this, several reasons are given: they are afraid that the force and attraction of habit will make them abandon the taste for arms for that of agriculture... The highest honour for a city is for this to be surrounded by devastated frontiers and wide open spaces. They believe that the essence of courage is to force neighbouring peoples to abandon their territory and to ensure that no-one dare to establish himself in the vicinity: at the same time they think that in this way they are more secure, by not having to fear any sudden invasions. Robbery committed beyond the boundaries of the city is nothing shameful: it serves, they say, to keep the young people busy and to diminish idleness.²⁶

Tacitus depicts even more strongly the bellicose spirit and barbarity of the Germans.

The crowning dishonour is to have abandoned his shield... He speaks of his wounds to his mother or to his wife; and the latter do not fear to count the sores or to measure the size of them. In the struggle, they provide food for the combatants and exhort them... If the city of their birth languishes in the idleness of a long peace, the chiefs of the youth go to seek war against some foreign people: so much so does this nation hate repose! Moreover, it is easier to win renown in perils; and the rule of force and of arms is needed to maintain numerous companions... You would persuade them much less easily to till the land and to await the harvest, than to go looking for enemies or wounds. In their eyes, it is a sign of laziness and cowardice to acquire by the sweat of one's brow what they can obtain by blood... They also wear the skins of animals, which are rougher towards the Rhine and more elaborate in the interior of the country, where commerce does not provide any other form of dress. There, the animals are chosen and, to improve the appearance of the hides, they are covered with stains and variegated with skins of monsters from the unknown shores of the farthest ocean...

...There is no ostentation in their funeral services; only in the case of famous men are their bodies burnt by using a special kind of wood.²⁷

A passage from Tacitus regarding the importance of the maternal uncle among the German suggests often that the latter knew matriarchy. This opinion would be well-founded if the nephew inherited from the uncle in the Germanic society, but Tacitus shows us the opposite: the son inherited from his father.

Nevertheless in this country, marriage is chaste and there is no other trait in their customs which merits more praise. Almost alone among the barbarians they are satisfied with one wife, except for a large number of leaders who take several, not in a spirit of debauchery, but because several families covet an alliance with them. It is not the wife, but the husband who provides a dowry...

...The son of a sister is as dear to his uncle as to his father; some even think that the first of these ties is the healthier and the closer; and, when receiving hostages, they prefer nephews, as inspiring an attachment which is stronger and which affects the family more widely. Nevertheless their own children are their heirs and successors.²⁸

In the event of these facts not making the exception which confirms the rule, one might try to explain them by an outside influence. The inconsistency of the national culture of the Germans at this period, and of barbarians in general, rendered them particularly susceptible to the Southern customs, which were brought to them at the same time as manufactured products by the Phoenicians. There is a tendency to regard the German people of the Northern part of the Roman Empire, between the Rhine and the Danube, as cut off from all outside influence, and especially that of the South. This point of view must be put aside, in so far as they did undergo this influence even in their religious beliefs.

The Suebian Germans made sacrifices to Isis. Tacitus who tells of this fact, is surprised and attributes it to an external influence.

A part of the Suebians also make sacrifices to Isis. I cannot find the cause of the origin of this foreign cult. Only the figure of a ship, which is its symbol, shows that it came to them from across the sea.²⁹

It is in the domain of religion that people are generally the most

impervious to all outside influence. When this mental fortress is battered, the others, less solid, such as family relations and the like have already had to undergo severe damage and profound modification. Now the religious influence of the South, in the Germania of that time, and in the whole of Northern Europe, was more widespread, more profound and more durable than is often imagined. It extended as far as England, probably by the intermediary of the Phoenicians who went there to look for tin.

According to Tacitus (Germans, 9), part of the Suebians, a Germanic people, made sacrifices to Isis; in fact, inscriptions have been found in which Isis is associated with the Holy City of Noreia; Noreia is known today as Neumarkt, in Styria. Isis, Osiris, Seraphis, Anubis had temples in France at Fréjus, Nîmes, Arles, Riez (in the Basses-Alpes), Parzer (Isère), Manduel (Gard), Boulogne (Haute-Garonne), at Lyon, Besançon, Langres and Soissons. Isis was honoured at Melun and Sérapis in England at York and Brougham Castle, and also in Pannania and in Norique.³⁰

At the time of Caesar, who wrote about 150 years before Tacitus, the Germans knew nothing of most of the gods they were later to worship; they only knew three of these. Their religion was reduced to its most simple expression. Later they enriched their Pantheon by integrating into it, in increasing numbers, Southern gods.

The customs of the Germans are very different for they have no Druids to preside over the worship, and scarcely bother with sacrifices. They only count the gods they can see and whose benefits can be felt: the sun, Vulcan and the moon: they have never even heard of the others. They spend all their life hunting or in warlike pursuits and, from infancy, they apply themselves to becoming hardened against fatigue.³¹

This foreign influence, from the South, in the North of Europe and in all the Mediterranean, is attested even by linguistic fossils.

The mutation of ll into dd (dental r sound in which the point of the tongue is folded back to touch the upper part of the palate, sometimes even with the lower part of the tongue) in Sardinia, Sicily,

Apulia and Calabria, does not represent a change of minor importance in fundamentals, nor of less considerable interest. According to Merlo, this particular mode of articulation was due to a Mediterranean people, who lived in the area before its Romanisation. Although cacuminal sounds exist equally in other languages, the articulatory mutation here proceeded on such a wide basis and in a domain which, stretching beyond the seas, has a character so clearly archaic, that the idea of Merlo has all the appearance of truth. Doubtless Rohlf's would object that cacuminal sounds are equally to be found elsewhere. But these are, in fact, cases which confirm to a certain extent the opinion of Merlo. In the same way Pott and Benfey disclosed some time ago that the cacuminal articulation introduced into the Aryan languages spoken by the invaders of the Deccan came from the Dravidian populations already established there.³²

It is remarkable that, at the time of Caesar, there existed no goddess in the German Pantheon. While this represents an inconsistency for a people who had known matriarchy, it would prove that the *Nibelungen* (German verse chronicles) arose at a later date, perhaps in the Middle Ages.

SCYTHIA

In the first century B.C. the Scythians were still semi-nomadic. Their terrifying customs are described by Herodotus in Book IV of his work. Their case is all the more important in that they seem to form the human group which remained nearest to the original state and location of the Indo-Europeans.

When a king died, they hauled his body from tribe to tribe after having embalmed it in the Egyptian manner: the body was smeared with wax; the abdomen, after being emptied of its entrails and cleaned out, was filled with aromatics and sewn up again. Whenever the funeral cortege arrived among one of their tribes, the members of this indulged in all sorts of mutilation; some cut off their ear-tips, or shaved off their hair, while others made incisions on their arms or tore off bits of their foreheads or noses; certain of them plunged arrows into their left hands. After which the tribe increased the size of the cortege and it continued on its rounds till it arrived among the Gerrhians, the most northerly tribe of the group. The body was then laid in the funeral chamber:

...In the open space around the body of the king they bury one of his concubines, first killing her by strangling, and also his cup-bearer, his cook, his groom, his lackey, his messenger, some of his horses, firstling of all his other possessions, and some golden cups; for they use neither silver nor brass. After this they set to work and raise a vast mound above the grave, all of them vying with each other and seeking to make it as tall as possible. When a year is gone by, further ceremonies take place. Fifty of the best of the late King's attendants are taken, all native Scythians – for as bought slaves are unknown in the country, the Scythian kings choose any of their subjects that they like, to wait on them – fifty of these are taken and strangled, with fifty of the most beautiful horses. When they are dead, their bowels are taken out and the cavity cleaned, filled full of chaff, and straightaway sewn up again. This done, a number of posts are driven into the ground, in sets of two pairs each, and on every pair half the felly of a wheel is placed archwise; then strong stakes are run lengthways through the bodies of the horses from tail to neck, and they are mounted up upon the fellies, so that the felly in front supports the shoulders of the horse, while that behind sustains the belly and quarters, the legs dangling in mid-air; each horse is furnished with a bit and bridle, which latter is stretched out in front of the horse, and fastened to a peg. The fifty strangled youths are then mounted severally on the fifty horses. To effect this, a second stake is passed through their bodies along the course of the spine to the neck; the lower end of which projects from the body, and is fixed into a socket, made in the stake that runs lengthwise down the horse. The fifty riders are thus ranged in a circle round the tomb, and so left.

Such, then, is the mode in which the kings are buried...³³

It was necessary to quote this passage in its entirety to give an idea of the cultural level in Scythia at the time of Herodotus. The principle of the burial seems to have been inspired by Egyptian customs; but the cruelty which was grafted onto it is a cultural trait which related to the Northern Eurasian cradle.

Life was based on a patriarchal social organisation, with an exaggerated tendency towards the lechery characteristic of these regions. During the saquaic feasts of Mylitta a slave was enthroned and courtesans and all the other appertenances of royalty were at his disposition; after which, he was burnt alive. *Total promiscuity was the rule during the feast. Their religion required the women to prostitute themselves in the temples (sacred places).*

In Aquisilene, that is to say in the country situated between the Euphrates and Mount Taurus, was a sanctuary of Anaitis, in which girls of the most noble origin became sacred courtesans, by sacrificing their virginity to the goddess. They were surrounded by a profound respect and no man hesitated to take one as a wife. There existed, in Babylon, a similar type of prostitution. But while the Babylonian prostitutes, dedicated to Mylitta, were forced to give themselves to all and sundry, the girls dedicated to Anaitis, were reserved for men belonging to their own social class, the aristocracy.³⁴

This type of promiscuity, as well as the myths of Ganymede, of Sodom and of Gomorrah, are specifically Eurasian and have no equivalent in either the tradition, the mythology or the literature of Africa whether of Egypt or of Black Africa.

The Egyptians first made it a point of religion to have no converse with women in the sacred places, and not to enter them without washing, after such converse. Almost all other nations, except the Greeks and the Egyptians, act differently, regarding man as in this matter under no other law than the brutes. Many animals, they say, and various kinds of birds, may be seen to couple in the temples and the sacred precincts, which would certainly not happen if the gods were displeased with it. Such are the arguments by which they defend their practices, but I nevertheless can by no means approve of it...³⁵

Engels, after having analysed, in turn, the prostitution of the maidens dedicated to Anaitis and to Mylitta, arrived at the same conclusion:

Similar practices in religious disguise are common to almost all Asiatic peoples between the Mediterranean and the Ganges.³⁶

All the historians and ethnologists who have compared the African and Asian societies have been led to consider Western Asia as the land of lechery, in contrast to the healthiness of African customs:

As the goddess of fertility, Isis corresponded to the great Mother-Goddesses of Asia; but she differed from them by the chastity and fidelity of her conjugal life: the others were unmarried and had corrupt

habits; Isis had a husband and to him she was a faithful wife, as she was an affectionate mother to her son. Her beautiful Madonna-like figure also reflects a state of society and of morals, more refined than the uncouth, sensual and cruel figures of Astarte, Anaitis, Cybele and others.³⁷

The saquaic feasts were celebrated by the Babylonians, Armenians and Persians. Their origin is very controversial. To certain historians they are of Babylonian origin. Details of their ritual are known from the Biblical writers, such as Ezekiel. Turel maintains that according to tradition it was Cyrus, the king of the Persians, who instituted them, following a victory over the Saques (or Scythians): they would thus seem to be of Scythian origin; moreover, they differ in no way from the Scythian habits known to us from Herodotus. In any event, the adjective 'saquaic' seems to confirm their Scythian origins.

Their study must, therefore, end the paragraphs referring to Scythia and prepare the way for the study of the zone of confluence. We wished to see in them a temporary return to primitive equality; however that may be, they remain peculiar to Asia and arise specifically from the culture of that region.

ZONE OF CONFLUENCE

Western Asia is the true zone of confluence or meeting place of the two cradles, that which has been most bitterly disputed between the two worlds. Its study offers, therefore, a particular interest in the sense that it leads to the idea of a real intermixing of influences and peoples coming from both regions. The geographical area considered here is bounded by the Indus.

ARABIA

Arabia was at first peopled by Southern peoples who were later submerged by those coming from the North and the East.

According to Lenormant, an empire of the Cushites was formed which originally covered all Arabia. This was the era personified by the Adites – from Ad, the grandson of Ham.

Cheddah, the son of Ad and builder of the legendary 'earthly paradise' mentioned in the Koran, belongs to this age of the early Adites. The empire of the latter was destroyed in the eighth century B.C. by tribes of wild Jectanides who came from the North-east. They mixed with the Cushite population. The prophecy of Hud concerns this invasion. However, the Cushite element was not slow to regain the upper hand, from a political and cultural point of view; these first Jectanide waves were completely absorbed by the Cushites. This was the era called the second Adite period.

However, after the first disorders of the invasion, since the Cushites were still the more numerous in point of population, and since they had a great superiority of knowledge and civilisation over the Jectanides who had scarcely left the nomadic life, they very soon recovered the moral and material supremacy and the political dominance. A new empire was formed in which the power still remained with the Sabeans, descendants of the Cushites. For several centuries the Jectanide tribes lived under the laws of that empire, becoming quietly greater. For the most part they adopted the customs, the language, the institutions and the culture of the empire to such a degree that later, when they are seen to have seized power, this resulted in no appreciable change either in civilisation, in language or in religion.

The era of this new empire is called the second Adite Age by the Arab historians.³⁸

These facts, about which the Arab authors themselves agree, prove that it would be more judicious to consider the Semites and the Semitic culture not as a *sui generis* reality, but as the product of an intermixing whose historical constituents are known. It was during the early centuries of the second Adite Empire that Egypt conquered the country, during the minority of Thothmes III. Lenormant thinks that Arabia is the land of Punt and of the Queen of Sheba; it must also be remembered that, according to the Bible, Punt, one of the sons of Ham, lived in this same country. In the eighth century B.C., the Jectanides, who had then become sufficiently strong, seized power in the same way – and towards the same period – as the Assyrians had done with regard to the Babylonians, whom Lenormant considers equally to be Cushites.

But although they had the same customs and the same language, the two peoples who made up the population of Southern Arabia remained quite separate and quite opposed in their interests, as did the Assyrians and the Babylonians in the basin of the Euphrates, the first of whom were, in the same way, Semites and the second, Cushites...

...As long as the empire of the second Adites lasted, the Jectanides were subject to the Cushites. But a day came when they felt themselves to be strong enough to be masters in their turn. They attacked the Adites under the leadership of Iârob and succeeded in beating them; the date of this revolution is generally fixed at the beginning of the eighth century B.C.³⁹

According to Lenormant, after the Jectanides' victory, some of the Adites crossed the Red Sea at the straits of Badel-Mandeb to settle in Ethiopia, while the rest remained in Arabia, as refugees in the mountains of the Hadramaut and in other places: hence the Arab proverb: 'To split up like the Sabeans'.

This was the reason for which Southern Arabia and Ethiopia became inseparable from a linguistic and ethnographic point of view.

A long time before the discovery of the Hymyaritic language and inscriptions, it had been noticed that the ghez, or Abyssinian dialect, is a living relic of the ancient language of the Yemen.⁴⁰

The caste system, foreign to 'the Semites and Aryans', was the foundation of the social organisation, as it was in Babylon, Egypt, Black Africa and the kingdom of Malabar in India.

This system is essentially Cushite and wherever it is found, it is easy to establish that it stems originally from this race. We have seen it flourish in Babylon. The Aryans of India, who adopted it, had borrowed it from the peoples of Cush, who preceded them in the Indus and Ganges basins...

...Lockmân, the mythical representative of Adite wisdom, brings to mind Aesop, whose name seems to M. Welcker to reveal an Ethiopian origin. In India as well, the literature of the tales and fables seems to come from the Sutras. Perhaps this style of fiction, typified by the rôle played in it by animals, portrays the kind of literature proper to the Cushites.⁴¹

It must be remembered that Lockmān, who belonged to the second Adite Age, was also the builder of the famous Mareb dam, whose waters:

were sufficient to water and fertilize the plain as far away as seven days walk around the town... There still exist, to this day, extensive ruins of this, which several travellers have visited and studied.⁴²

The Jectanides 'who were still, at the moment of their arrival in an almost barbaric state', only introduced, to be quite accurate, the system of pastoral tribes characteristic of the Northern cradle and the institution of military feudalism.

On this base, which was always preserved, of institutions and customs borrowed from the Adites of the race of Cush, and on the caste system, the Jectanides, once they became the masters, implanted a political organisation which resembles that of most of the other Semitic peoples, and which differs from that which we find in the Hamitic empires, in Egypt, Phoenicia, Babylon and among the Narikas of Malabar, the tribal system and military feudalism, two institutions dear to all the Arabs.⁴³

The religion was of Cushite origin and seems to have stemmed directly from that of the Babylonians; it was to remain unchanged until the coming of Islam.

It is impossible not to recognise the Chaldeo - Assyrian gods, Illu, Bel, Samas, Ishtar, Sin, Samdan, Nisruk, in the Yemenite gods, Il, Bil, Schmas, Athor, Sin, Sindan, Nasr.⁴⁴

The god Il was the object of a national cult; he bore the following names: Lord of the Heavens, Merciful, etc... The only triad which was worshipped was that of Venus-Sun-Moon, as in Babylon; religion had a very marked sidereal character, especially a solar one; prayers were offered to the sun at different moments in its course. There was neither idolatry nor images nor priesthood. Invocations were made direct to the seven planets. The thirty days fast already existed - similar to that practised in Egypt - and seven times a day prayers were offered with faces turned to the North. These prayers are allied

to those of the Mohammedan religion. All the elements necessary to the birth of Islam, were thus present more than 1000 years before the birth of Mohammed, and Islam appears as a 'purging' of Sabaism by 'God's messenger.' This superimposition of the two influences, Northern and Southern, on the Arabian peninsula, occurred in every sphere and even literature and the romantic heroes were not exempt from it.

In spite of the value they attach to their genealogy and to the privileges of blood, the Arabs, especially the sedentary inhabitants of the towns, do not keep their race pure from all intermixture...

...But the infiltration of Black blood, which has spread to all parts of the peninsula and which it seems one day must completely alter the race, began in earliest antiquity. It occurred first in Yemen, whose geographical situation and whose commerce placed it in continual contact with Africa...

...The same infiltration came more slowly, and at a later date, in the Hedjaz or in the Nedjd. But it happened there as well and at a date earlier than seems generally believed. The romantic hero of pre-Islamic Arabia, Antar, was a mulatto on his mother's side, yet his African features did not prevent him marrying a princess of one of the tribes most proud of their nobility; these melanic mixtures being so familiar and so generally accepted for a long time as part of the customs, during the centuries immediately preceding Mohammed.⁴⁵

The mixed character of the Semitic languages can be explained in the same way. Thus roots can be found which are common to the Arab, Hebrew, Syriac and Indo-European languages. This common vocabulary is more important than can be seen from the very short list which follows. No contact between the Northerners and the Arabs during the history of humanity permits us to explain this; it is a relationship and not a borrowing.

<i>Arabic</i>	<i>French</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>German</i>
ain	œil	eye	auge (oculus latin)
ard	terre	earth	erde
beled	lande	land	land
Qasr	château	castle	
aswad	noir		schwarz

In other respects, certain Arabic words seems to be of Egyptian origin of the time of the pharaohs.

<i>Arabic</i>	<i>Egyptian</i>
Nabi = Prophet	Nab = the master (of knowledge)
Raadou = Thunder	Ra = heavenly god
	Raadou = Ra is speaking (in Walaſ)
Ba-ra-ka = divine benediction	Ba-Ra-Ka = benediction

It is remarkable that many Arabic religious terms can be obtained by a simple combination of the three Egyptian ontological notions, Ba, Ra, Ka. As examples we can cite:

- KABAR (a) = The action of raising the arms in prayer
RAKA = The action of placing the forehead on the ground
KAABA = The holy place of Mecca*

It is sufficiently obvious from what has just been said that Arabia was first inhabited by Southern peoples, sedentary and agricultural, who prepared the way for the nomads in different fields of progress. In this early society, woman enjoyed all the advantages pertaining to the matriarchal régime; this is proved by the fact a woman could be a queen. The reign of the Queen of Sheba, who ruled over Ethiopia and South Arabia, was the most glorious and the most celebrated in the history of this region. The triumph of the Northern nomadic element was accompanied by the dominance of the patriarchal system, tinged with apparent anomalies, survivals of the previous régime. Thus, the dowry was given to the woman, as in the matriarchal régime. This fact can only be explained by invoking the influence of Sabaism on Islamic society.

WESTERN ASIA: PHOENICIA

Phoenicia must necessarily be distinguished from Israel, whose name was only mentioned in historical records beginning with the

* See note at end of chapter.

nineteenth Egyptian dynasty, while Phoenicia, or Canaan, was already more than a thousand years old.

The man found in Canaan in prehistoric times, the Natoufian, was a Southerner; the Capsian industry, which radiated from North Africa (the region of Tunisia) to this spot, was also of Southern origin. According to the Bible, when the first Northern peoples arrived there, they found a Southern people there; the Canaanites, descendants of Canaan, brother of Mizraim the Egyptian and of Cush the Egyptian, all sons of Ham.

Now the Lord said unto Abraham, Get out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:...

So Abraham departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot his brother's son...

And Abraham took Sarah his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance... and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan and into... Canaan they came.

And Abraham passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.⁴⁶

After many vicissitudes the Canaanites and the North-eastern tribes, symbolised by Abraham and his descendants (the house of Isaac), merged to become, in time, the Hebrew people of today:

And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying:

These men are peaceable with us therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.⁴⁷

This passage, which in the biblical context is supposed to be a ruse designed to suppress the Canaanites, betrays nonetheless the economic necessities which at that period must have regulated the relations between the invaders and the natives. The history of Phoenicia becomes, therefore, more comprehensible if one takes into

account the facts given in the Bible, according to which the Canaanites – later to be called the Phoenicians – were, in the beginning, a Southern, sedentary and agricultural people, with whom nomadic tribes from the North-east had later mixed. Since then, the expression Leuco-Syrians applied to certain peoples of this region, instead of being contradictory, as believed by Hoefer, is in fact a confirmation of the evidence of the Bible.

The name of the Syrians seems to be spread over the region from Babylon to the Gulf of Issus, and even formerly from this Gulf to the Black Sea. In this way the Cappadocians, those of Taunus as well as those of the Black Sea, have preserved to this day the name of Leuco-Syrians (white Syrians) as if there had also been black Syrians.⁴⁸

It is perhaps an original relationship which partially explains the alliance – throughout history – between Mizraim and Canaan. Even in the most troubled ages, Egypt was able to count on Phoenicia, as one is able, as it were, to count on one's brother.

Among the monumental tales engraved on the walls of the temples of Egypt and relating to the great insurrections, which, during a period of five centuries, broke out on various occasions in Syria against Egyptian domination, either at the instigation of the Assyrians, or Rotennou, or even of the Northern Hetheans or Khetas, the most formidable of which were subdued by Thothmes III, Seti I, Ramses II and Ramses III, there can never be found in the lists of insurgents or of vanquished the names of the Sidonians, their capital or any of their cities...

...A precious papyrus in the British Museum contains the fictitious story of a voyage to Syria by an Egyptian official, at the end of the reign of Ramses II after the conclusion of a peace with the Hetheans...

...In all this country, the traveller is on Egyptian soil and he has the same liberty of movement, the same security as he would have in the Nile valley, and can even, in pursuance of his functions, exercise his authority.⁴⁹

The importance of the rôle of the economic relations between Egypt and Phoenicia must certainly not be underestimated in explaining this loyalty which seems to have existed between the two countries.

It will be understood, following on this original relationship, that the religion and the beliefs of the Canaanites were only replicas of those of Egypt. The Phoenician cosmogony is known from fragments of Sanchoniaton, as has been mentioned above. According to these texts, there was in the beginning an uncreated and chaotic substance, in perpetual disorder, (*Bohu*); the Wind (*Rouah*) floated over the Chaos. The union of these two elements was called *Chephets*, the Desire which is the origin of all creation.

One is struck by the similarity of this cosmic trinity to that found in Egypt as reported by Amelineau in *Prolégomènes à l'étude de la religion Egyptienne* (*Prolegomena to the Study of Egyptian Religion*). According to the Egyptian cosmogony also, there was in the beginning an uncreated and chaotic matter, the primitive Noun; this matter contained embryonically the principles – the future archetypes of Plato – of all beings. The principle or god of Becoming, Khefru, was also included. As soon as Noun – or Nen – had engendered the god Ra, its rôle was finished; henceforth the line of descent remained uninterrupted up until Osiris, Isis and Horus, ancestors of the Egyptians. The primitive Trinity then passed from the scale of the universe to that of humanity.

In the same way, in the Phoenician cosmogony one arrived by successive generations at the same Egyptian ancestor, Misor, who engendered Taaut, the inventor of letters and of science (who is none other than the Egyptian Thot); and, by descent, this leads to Osiris and Canaan. Let us remember that Misor is none other than Mizraim.

And all these things were written in the sacred books, under the control of Taaut, by the seven Cabires, sons of Sydyk and their eighth brother, Eschmun. And those who received the heritage and transmitted the initiation to their successors were Osiris and Canaan, the ancestor of the Phoenicians.⁵⁰

Recent archaeological discoveries confirm the Southern origin of the Canaanites. The texts of Ras-Shamra situate the birthplace of the national heroes in the South, on the very frontiers of Egypt.

The texts of Ras-Shamra have been an occasion to study afresh the origin of the Phoenicians. While the notes about everyday life take account of the different foreign elements who took part in the

daily exchanges of the city, those which are devoted to the recension of the myths and the legends allude to a past which was quite different, and although they concern a city in the far North of Phoenicia, they adopt the extreme South, the Negeb, as the framework for the events they describe. They assign to the national heroes, to the ancestors, a dwelling place between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. This tradition has moreover been recorded by Herodotus (6th century B.C.) and before him by Zephaniah (7th century B.C.).⁵¹

Geographically, the portion of the earth situated between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean is essentially the same as Arabia Petraea; the country of the Anous who founded On of the North (Heliopolis), in prehistoric times. The Phoenicians, in so far as they fused with the Hebrews, constitute what is called the first Semitic branch, descending from Abraham by the line of Isaac – while the Arabs formed the second branch – the line of Ishmael. In both cases the Southern substratum is evident; that is why it is not historically accurate to disregard this in mounting Semitism into an absolute. The latter must be considered as the most pronounced sythesis of Northern and Southern elements.

INDUS AND MESOPOTAMIA

The sites of Mohenjo-Daro and of Harappa have revealed the existence of an urban and agricultural civilisation going back to the third millennium in all probability which collapsed suddenly (1500 B.C.), with the invasion of the Aryans. It was marked by a highly developed urbanism (use of drains). The towns fundamentally devoted to trade, were not surrounded by fortifications. The language spoken was not Indo-European; according to the experts, it was probably a Dravidian or Mounda language. Writing was well developed: 400 characters were employed, which can be reduced, according to studies made, to 250, while the cuneiform writing of Ourouk, of the same period, possessed 2,000 signs. Archaeological excavations have proved that at the time of El Obeid in Mesopotamia the Indus civilisation had already reached its apogee. This is the reason for the increasing tendency to explain Mesopotamia by the civilisations of the Indus. The latter, like all the southern civilisations, remained stable until its destruction by an outside element: the Aryan invasion of 1500 B.C.

From this date all traces of a material civilisation disappeared. It was necessary to wait till the third century B.C. to detect a sort of renaissance under the Emperor Acoka.

The destruction of the sites of the Indus must be attributed to the Aryan invasion, and not to the spread of the desert over the plain of Sind, for this region was still fertile when Alexander the Great crossed it, in the fourth century B.C.

The phallic cult, so widespread in India, preceded the Aryan invasion; this is a cult of fertility, mark of a sedentary, agricultural and matriarchal life. It is doubtless to be ascribed to the aboriginal Southern element which preceded the Northern element on the peninsula.

The facts which follow, which relate to the civilisation of India, are taken from the works of Jeanine Auboyer.⁵²

At the time of the arrival of the Aryans (1500 to 800 B.C.) North-west India was inhabited by a population whose dark-coloured skin (varna) had struck the newcomers, as had their flat noses and the language they spoke. They were referred to in general terms as Dravidians; certain of their individual names (Aja = goat) remind one of totemism. They posed a stout resistance to the invaders, but mixed with them in the course of time.

For reports exist of mixed marriages, proving that at this distant period the Aryan conquerors had not yet felt the necessity, as was later to be the case, of protecting themselves too rigorously against the possible damage of interbreeding.⁵³

To the nomadism of the newcomers was opposed the sedentary and agricultural life of the Dravidians. We can recall here the ideas we formulated regarding the term to till in the different Indo-European languages. Agriculture still not having been a part of the Aryan customs at the time of their arrival, the expression indicating this activity was absent from their language and they were forced to adopt a Dravidian word.

Tilling – indicated by a word common to the Indians and the Iranians – is done with the aid of a plough which is very probably a swing-plough drawn by two sheep...

...This rural and agrarian life is based on a village society of the

patriarchal type, which also offers traces of matriarchy, and whose principal acts are based on sacrifice.⁵⁴

The cow was already sacred; it was forbidden to kill or to eat it. It was perhaps more economical to preserve it for the milk it provided and for the increase of the herd.

'The abandonment of the female children', 'colleges of the Hetaerae', 'domestic hearth', 'cremation' were all cultural traits existing during the Vedic period and were doubtless brought by the Aryans.

All family life is ordered by the domestic ritual. It is centred round the fire (agni), which is placed in the house or in the middle of an enclosure of logs, or even outside, and which is the real master of the house (garhapatya).⁵⁵

...The corpse is laid out and is carried in procession... When it arrives at the place where it is to be cremated, the corpse is again laid out and placed on the funeral pyre; the widow takes her place at his side, but is asked to get down again (although, later, she would indeed be burnt) and become the wife of the dead man's brother.⁵⁶

Side by side with monogamy, the ruling classes practised polygamy, that is to say among the Aryans and Dravidians of high rank. In fact during the Vedic period 'the castes were not strictly defined as during later periods, and were not yet sealed off one from the other.'⁵⁷

It can thus be seen that on the Indian peninsula the superimposition of the two cultures, Southern and Northern, matriarchal and patriarchal, is not open to doubt. Here, less than anywhere else, could one not speak of a universal transition, that is to say, an internal one among the same people, from matriarchy to patriarchy. What occurred was an overlapping and a triumph, with a certain alteration of the culture of the ruling classes.

MESOPOTAMIA

In the beginning, about 3000 B.C., three regions could be distinguished: ancient Elam or Susiana, Sumer with Uruk its capital,

and Akkad, the capital of which was Agade. The Mesopotamian history of the early millennia is not well-known. However, as far as Elam is concerned, archaeology, thanks to the excavations of Dieulafoy, throws a curious light on the nature of the early dynasties. While demolishing a Sassanian wall, constructed of older material found on the same spot, monuments were discovered dating back to the Elamite period of the history of Susa.

When removing a tomb placed across a wall of crude bricks, which was a part of the fortifications of the Elamite Door, the workers brought to light a funeral urn around which was a stone case of enamelled bricks. They came from a panel which depicted a person of rank, superbly dressed in a green robe, overloaded with yellow, blue and white embroidery and wearing a tiger skin and carrying a can or a golden spear. The most curious thing about this person, of whom I found the lower part of the face, the beard, the neck and a hand, was that he was black. The lips are narrow, the beard bushy, and the embroidery on the clothes, of an archaic character, seems to be the work of Babylonian workers.

In other Sassanian walls, constructed of older materials, enamelled bricks were found showing two feet shod in gold and a very well-drawn hand; the wrist is covered with bracelets and the fingers grasp the long staff which became under the Achemenides the emblem of sovereign power; a piece of robe emblazoned with the arms of Susa (a view of the town in the Assyrian manner) partly hidden under a tiger skin. Finally, a frieze ornamented with flower work on a brown background. The hands and the feet were black. It could even be seen that the whole decoration had been prepared with the idea of harmonising it with the dark colour of the face. Only powerful figures had the right to carry long canes and bracelets; only the governor of a fortified town had the right to have a portrait of this embroidered on his tunic. Now, the owner of the staff, the master of the citadel, is black; it is thus very possible that Elam was the prerogative of a Black dynasty, and if one refers to the characteristics of the figure already found, of an Ethiopian dynasty. Can it be that we are in the presence of one of those Ethiopians of the Levant of whom Homer spoke? Were the Nakhuntas the descendants of a princely family related to the Black races which reigned over Southern Egypt?⁵⁸

Dr. Contenau arrives at similar conclusions:

The man of Susa, notably, the probable result of a mixing between Cushite and Black, with his relatively flat nose, dilated nostrils, prominent cheekbones and thick lips, is a racial type well observed and well-rendered.⁵⁹

At a very early stage this Southern element must have crossed with a Northern element. This is what seems to be affirmed by an examination of the present population, the results of which are also recorded by Dr. G. Contenau, quoting Houssaye:

Aryano-Negroids corresponding to the ancient Susians, who belonged largely to the Negritos, a Black race of small stature and small cranial capacity...

We are here dealing with one of the three strata of the present population.

Dr. Contenau continues:

Although this classification could undergo some slight alterations, the place accorded in it to the Negroids should be remembered.⁶⁰

Practically nothing is known of the organisation of the family in ancient Elam. The records we possess, as we have previously learnt, permit us only to affirm the anteriority of a Southern substratum; now, it is known that this latter is linked with agrarian life, of a sedentary or matriarchal character. The Aryan invasion, coming from the Iranian plateau, went on without interruption until the time of the Medes and the Persians who brought among other Northern practices, the worship of fire, which was so typical.

As for the Sumerians, we are still not at the point of penetrating the mystery of their origin; but it is known, almost certainly, that they were neither Aryans (that is to say Indo-Europeans) nor Semites, of the Mongolian race. They were sedentary and agrarian, practising irrigation. The oldest period of their civilisation is alleged, out of solidarity,⁶¹ to go back to 3000 B.C. to make it coincide with the very beginning of Egyptian history. For a long time there were only city-kingdoms, although lower Mesopotamia offered all the characteristics favourable to territorial unification. We must wait till

about 2100 B.C., during the Babylonian era of Hammurabi, to witness the birth of the first Mesopotamian empire. Sumerian history presents one important particularity; the whole of its first period is known only through inferences drawn from the Code of Hammurabi.

In studying closely the Babylonian records – the writing as much as the system of organisation – experts became aware that this period was not a beginning, but an advanced stage, implying an earlier period. And in this way the period called the 'Sumerian Period' was discovered.

The only reign during the Sumerian Period which has left any significant traces is that of Gudea. We possess a series of statues of him, which are rather puzzling, from the invariable choice of stone (black diorite), the almost systematic mutilation of the statues and the peculiarity of the facial traits. One of these statues, found at Tello, represents Gudea holding on his knee the plan of a temple intended for the god, Nin-Girsou; an inscription glorifying the god contains an idea which seems to be at the origin of the saquaic feasts. In fact, it is said that at the inauguration of the temple, there were seven days of feasting during which complete equality reigned among the inhabitants of the city.

The servant girl vied with her mistress, the manservant emulated his master; in my city, the powerful and the weak went side by side; on the lips of scandal-mongers, evil words were changed to good.

This inscription on the statue of Gudea, called the Architect (2400 B.C.), is the oldest historical record of the saquaic feasts: it reinforces the theory of the Babylonian origin of these. Perhaps the Scythians adapted them in such a way that their purpose was completely changed.

André Aymard, in analysing the Hammurabic Code, tries to clarify Babylonian family legislation and social stratification:

The Hammurabic set of laws precedes by several centuries that of the Assyrians. Nevertheless it betrays unerringly a social state which one might be tempted to consider more advanced. But in the case in point account must be taken of its ethnic character. It scarcely seems surprising that among a warlike people such as the Assyrians the woman should be maintained in an inferior juridical situation.⁸²

This is as much as saying that the condition of woman deteriorated with the arrival of the Semites. Formerly, the woman enjoyed a legal status superior to that of the Greek or Roman woman. Limited monogamy was the general rule. But an additional fact related by André Aymard emphasizes perhaps to a degree the Cushite character of Babylonian society, already stressed by Lenormant.

Indeed, while the children born of the marriage of a free woman and a slave are free like their mother, those who are born of the union of a master and a concubine who is also a slave, are only emancipated legally, at the same time as their mother, on the death of their father.⁶³

The matriarchal and meridional points of view, according to which the child is what the mother is, seems here to be triumphant in the Hammurabic Code. Whether or not Hammurabi was a Semite from the West or elsewhere, the society which he organised by his legislation was nonetheless impregnated with Cushitism. Everything happened as if a Cushite base perpetuated itself culturally in spite of ethnic changes which were frequent in this region. But this foundation was to change profoundly with the passage of time.

Another comment by André Aymard allows this idea to be brought out:

The originality of this division (society in three classes) is the existence of the intermediate class. We do not know the origin of this; we are equally ignorant as to whether it was confined to specific professions. We must resign ourselves to stating only that it exists, and that the law places it halfway between the others...

The Hammurabic Code attests strongly to the existence, at least in the cities, of three categories of human beings: man, that is to say man in the highest sense of the word, the free man; man who bows down, the underling, the inferior, the man of low birth; finally the slave, the property of another man, freeman or underling.⁶⁴

As will be seen in Chapter VI and especially in the main thesis, the social stratification is identical, from every point of view, to that of a society of castes in the African sense of the word, that is to say, in the sense of Lenormant and Renan. This is what led Lenormant

to classify Babylonian society among those with a caste system. In the latter, indeed, the groups of men without any manual profession, the warriors and priests, constitute the highest castes, or more exactly those 'without caste', that is to say, men in the highest sense of the word, of whom we have just heard. The term 'man of caste' is reserved to the subordinate category of free men who practise the ensemble of artisan occupations; he can be the slave of no one, and he can even own slaves; but within the bounds of social relations, he must 'prostrate himself' before the man of the first category, and he must give way to him. His degree of fortune can never influence or improve his social status. Finally, the body of slaves forms a third category.

The origin of the Chaldeans is no more certain than that of the Sumerians, although the first are more readily considered to be Semites. According to Diodorus Siculus, the first human grouping to which Chaldea owes its name was a caste of Egyptian priests who had emigrated and who, settling on the upper Euphrates, continued to practise and to teach astrology according to the principles transmitted by their mother caste.⁶⁵

However that may be, this primitive nucleus was unable to resist for long in the temporal domain the invasion of a different ethnic element; it was only on the intellectual and spiritual domains that its resistance must have been more enduring by which it was perpetuated.

Towards 1250 B.C. the Assyrians seized Babylon. This was assuredly a victory of shepherds from the mountains, speaking a Semitic language very similar to Accadia, while the Sumerian language was neither Semitic, nor Indo-European, nor Chinese.

BYZANTIUM

The Roman Empire survived in the East for nine centuries with Byzantium as its capital which was later to become the town of Constantine or Constantinople.

No document of any kind and no established custom regulated the succession to the throne; complete indeterminacy reigned on this question. Palace intrigues provided the best privileges and the best opportunities. Sometimes the emperors, while still alive, took their

heirs as partners to the throne: this was the case of Justinian, supported by his wife the Empress Theodora*. The latter, while knowing how to appear an empress worthy of her rank, was none the less by her origins a courtesan who gradually rose up through her intrigues. It was thanks to her presence of mind that Justinian was able to quell the celebrated revolt which took place spontaneously in the Hippodrome, where 30,000 demonstrators were slaughtered.

With the Porphyrogenetes, an attempt was made to establish a curious practice: in order to be heir, it was necessary to be born at Constantinople in the purple Chamber of the Palace. Everything in this complex society seemed to be dominated by a refined cruelty. Queen Irene, a contemporary of Charlemagne, who ruled alone, did nonetheless belong to that group of Asiatic sovereigns whose reign can in no way be linked with some matriarchal practice. The same thing held true later for the queens of Tsarist Russia which had felt the influence of Byzantium.

In the whole expanse of the zone of confluence, from Arabia to the Indus, it has been possible, to a certain degree on the basis of documents which have been found, and sometimes in spite of the scantiness of these, to decompose the different societies encountered and studied into their historical components, Southern or Northern, the better to analyse them and to probe into their nature.

It has been possible to show everywhere the pre-existence of a meridional substratum, which was later covered by a Northern contribution. But the problems would have been simple if reality did not often have an inconveniencing nature; if here and there, in the two different cradles, apparent anomalies had not been found.

* Theodora was an actress before becoming empress by means of intrigue. The Empress Theophanic, the wife of Roman II, was the daughter of an innkeeper who owed her rise to power to her own intrigues.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER III

The trilaterals in Walaf seem to come, for the most part, from a former method of using prefixes which is no longer in use today.

e.g.: digen dja bôt → dja bôt → djabôt = woman who carries
on her back,
mother of a family
aren bu sev → bu sev → busèv → busé
ground nut which small = small seed of ground nut
vaj djay mber → djay mber → djambar? = brave boy who
champion

Certain recent prefixes are still used.

e.g.: nit ku gav = ku gav = who is fast
the man who fast
nit ku bah → ku bah = who is good
the man who good

It does not seem rash to explain the Semitic 'trilateralism' by generalizing about this method of using prefixes. It will be understood why, in suppressing the first consonant of an Arab root for example, one finds very often an African or Indo-European root.

e.g.: b-led → land = pays (Indo-European)
kelba → lab = labber (Walaf)

Bilateralism would appear thus to be the primitive state of the language.

CHAPTER IV

ANOMALIES NOTICED IN THE THREE ZONES THEIR EXPLANATION

AFRICA

Even in this cradle, which seems to be that of matriarchy *par excellence*, facts can be pointed out which at first sight appear surprising and in truth contradictory.

REIGN OF QUEEN HATSHEPSOUT

She was the first queen in the history of humanity. This fact in itself merits attaching particular importance to the circumstances which surrounded her ascension to the throne. This latter is one of the particular features of Egyptian history which intrigues modern historians the most. To understand these features, let us have a look at her genealogy, with Maspero.

She was the only living child of Queen Ahmôsis and of Thothmes I, both of whom, brother and sister, were children of Amenôthes I and his sister Akhotpou II. Some time before his death, Thothmes I crowned Hatshepsout his daughter and married her to Thothmes II, son of another of his wives; thus Hatshepsout and Thothmes II were half-sister and half-brother. Contrary to the opinion widely held among western historians, the mother of Thothmes II was not a concubine of Thothmes I, in comparison with the mother of Hatshepsout. She was an equally legitimate wife, over whom the first wife of the pharaoh only just took precedence. She cannot be compared with a woman acquired in a raid or by other means and thrown into a harem to provide bastards of a king whose only legitimate children and sole heirs were the children born of the queen. If this were so,

the king could never have given his noble heiress in marriage to this his bastard son.

Let us imagine the hypothetical case of a pharaoh who married on the same day, in the same manner, his two sisters, born of the same father and mother and consequently having the same degree of nobility. No law forbids this to the pharaoh. If his two wives give birth to two children of the same sex on the same day, these have both the same rights to the throne. Let us now vary one of these two conditions: date of marriage, degree of nobility of the two women. There result automatically from this certain consequences with regard to the rights of succession of the children but these are far from being comparable to those which would be imposed on bastards. If the degree of nobility of the two mothers is equal, it is the child of the first wife who would have the succession rights, if he were the first-born. If the second wife, while being just as legitimately married as the first, is of less noble blood, her children have less rights to the throne, even if they are older. If she was originally a slave, her children have still less right to inherit, though not completely deprived of it, and are legitimate children. A bastard, from the African point of view, is a child had from a woman not married according to custom, whether she be princess, of common birth or a slave. He can inherit nothing.

Now Queen Hatshepsout, according to Maspero, derived from her mother, Ahmosis, and her grandmother Akhotpou, rights of succession superior, not only to those of her husband and brother Thothmes II, but to those of her own father, Thothmes I, the reigning pharaoh. Here matriarchy can be seen in operation: it is the greater or lesser nobility of the mother which supports the right to the throne to the exclusion of the father, who, even in certain cases such as this, can be replaced by a heavenly father. Hatshepsout, supported by the priests, finished by substituting Ammon for her own father. It will be remembered that when Athena did this, in the Greek legend, in contrast to Hatshepsout, it was to blot out her female line of descent, an idea which would never have occurred in Egypt, where matriarchy reigned.

Maspero affirms that, in the eyes of the Egyptian nation, Hatshepsout was the legitimate heiress of the ancient dynasties. She had a daughter by Thothmes II; but the latter had, by one of his wives named Isis, a son Thothmes III, raised for the priesthood in the

Theban Temple of Ammon. In spite of his secondary rôle, Thothmes II was able to associate Thothmes III to the throne, and placed him under the guardianship of Hatshepsout. The latter, playing the rôle of mother, married him to her daughter, who was also called Hatshepsout Mariri. The mother Hatshepsout continued to rule nonetheless, while keeping this household of children away from power. It was at her death that Thothmes III, aged 20, became Pharaoh.

Supported by the priests of Ammon, she wished to be a pharaoh in every sense of the word and even went so far as to wear a false beard, the symbol of authority. This manner of representing herself as a pharaoh was purely symbolic.

At the death of Thothmes II, his son, the future great conqueror, was still only a child and this is one of the reasons why Hatshepsout had no difficulty at all in exercising her regency, and prolonging it for twenty-two years.

In actual fact, it seems that in Egypt it was the woman who inherited the political rights, but that in as much as she was naturally physically inferior, it was her husband who reigned, while she assured the uterine continuity of the dynasty. Thus Hatshepsout proved her almost masculine energy, in organising the first expedition to the Coast of Somaliland in the land of Punt, from whence she brought back, among other riches, varieties of plants she was later to adapt to Egypt. She developed trade and had built for her the sumptuous tomb of Deir-el-Bahari.

THE AGE OF PTOLEMY

This corresponds with the thirty-eighth dynasty, which is the last foreign dynasty. Afterwards, Egypt became a Roman province. It numbered twenty sovereigns and lasted two hundred and seventy-five years. Of this period we shall deal only with those reigns which concern the subject here treated. The Greek kings adapted themselves to Egyptian tradition and customs: it was in this manner that marriage between brothers and sisters came to be practised by them. This happened in the case of *Ptolemy IV Philopator* who, after murdering his father, married his sister and whom, in turn, tired of her, he later killed.

Ptolemy VI ascended to the throne at the age of five, under the guardianship of his mother, Cleopatra. On his death *Ptolemy Euergetes II* seized the throne of Egypt, married his sister-in-law and murdered his nephew. *Ptolemy VII Soter II* succeeded him: he married in succession his two sisters, and was forced to flee the country and abandon the throne as the result of the intrigues of his mother, Cleopatra. He was replaced by his younger brother, *Ptolemy IX*, who was the favourite child of Cleopatra. However, she lost no time in trying to get rid of him, but her son was too quick for her and had his mother assassinated.

Ptolemy X (or *Alexander II*) came to the throne after some difficulty. Indeed, after the death of Soter II – who had been recalled – his daughter Berenice became queen. Alexander II married her in order to become king and later had her murdered. The Egyptian people were never to forgive him this crime. He died in exile at Tyre, after taking care, in his will, to leave the Kingdom of Egypt to the Romans. Then came the reign of Auletus, who was driven out and replaced on the throne by his two daughters, Cleopatra and Berenice. On the death of Cleopatra, the Romans replaced Auletus on the throne: he took advantage of this to put to death his daughter Berenice and all her adherents.

The eldest son of Auletus and his sister Cleopatra – the Cleopatra who was to remain celebrated in history – mounted the throne of the death of their father. She married successively her two brothers, who died one after the other. Forced to flee by the Egyptians, she withdrew for a while to Syria, but was brought back by the victorious troops of Julius Caesar, by whom she had a son, *Ptolemy Caesarian*. She seduced Antony at Tarsus in Cilicia and the latter proclaimed her 'Queen of Kings' and her son Caesar, 'King of Queens'. After the defeat of Antony by Octavian, Cleopatra hid in a tomb and spread rumours of her death in order to get rid of Antony. The latter did indeed commit suicide, but during his death agony had the painful surprise of knowing that Cleopatra was still alive. The queen counted on her charms to bewitch Octavian: when he resisted, she felt herself to be lost, since she had plotted against Rome, and she committed suicide by letting herself be stung by an asp. Egypt then fell under Roman domination.¹

In spite of the adoptive matriarchy imposed on the foreign

sovereigns from Greece by the tradition of Egyptian royalty, violence and intrigue continued to rule the true lot of princes and princesses. Egyptian history of the age of Ptolemy offers more than one trace of kinship with that of Byzantium. The queens of the Hellenic period were all born of the same blood and intriguers, rather than of authentic queens sanctioned by tradition. They were Aryan women who were adapting themselves to Southern customs and their case must not be confused with that of the queens of true matriarchal custom. Indeed, disregarding Byzantium which has already been considered as a separate eastern complex, it is in vain even at this early age that we should seek a queen ruling alone in Rome, which was less touched by the Southern influence.

AMAZONISM

The legend of the Amazons related here, is that which was gathered and handed down by Diodorus Siculus. It is essential to give a summary of this before proceeding to a detailed study of the idea of Amazonism.

According to Diodorus, the Amazons, supposedly of Africa, formerly lived in Libya. They disappeared several generations before the Trojan War, while those of Thermodon, in Asia Minor, still flourished. There had been in Libya, several races of women warriors, among whom were the *Gorgons* against whom Perseus fought. To the West of Libya at the edge of the earth, lived a people governed by women. The latter remained virgins until their military service had been completed; then they approached the men, became magistrates and fulfilled all other public duties. Men were kept apart from these functions and from the army. After the women had given birth to children, the men served as nursemaids. They were crippled at birth to render them unable to bear arms. The women had their right breasts removed so that they could shoot better with a bow. They lived on an island called the Hespera and situated towards the West, in Lake Tritonis; this lake takes its name from the River Triton which flows into it. This is found near the Atlas Mountains. The Amazons subdued all the towns of the Island except Mene, which was considered to be sacred and which was inhabited by ichthyophagous Ethiopians. They subjugated afterwards, in the

vicinity, the nomadic Libyan tribes and built at Lake Tritonis the town of Chessonesus (= peninsula). They conquered the Atlantes. Myrina, the queen of the Amazons, had a body of 2000 women cavalry, experienced in horsemanship. After her victories over the Atlantes and even the Gorgons, she had the bodies of her comrades cremated. Finally, the Amazons and the Gorgons were wiped out by Hercules, during an expedition to the West: from where the 'Pillars of Hercules'.

During her reign, Myrina went to Egypt and became friendly with Horus the son of Isis, who was at that time king of the country. From there she went to wage war on the Arabs, destroying a very large number of these. After this she subdued Syria, Cilicia and Phrygia, stopping at the River Caicus. She founded Cymene, Pitane, Priene and fought against the people of Thrace.²

In spite of the theory generally admitted, it is easy to see that the society thus described possesses nothing matriarchal: it reflects rather, although it is only a legend, the un pitying and systematic vengeance of one sex on another. To stay within the logic of this tradition, we are obliged to suppose an earlier period when the men of a certain region had the habit of considering all the female members of their community as slaves on whom any sort of treatment could be inflicted. The women, following a victorious revolt, took their revenge by practising a consummate technique of degradation of the men. Physically, the latter were crippled from birth in such a way as to be useless for military service: their education was conceived in such a fashion as only to inculcate lowly sentiments, to the exclusion of any ideas exalting courage or honour. They would have been disposed of, purely and simply, had they not been necessary for procreation. The idea of marriage or of a household, or of any sort of life in common was unthinkable.

Matriarchy is not an absolute and cynical triumph of woman over man; it is a harmonious dualism, an association accepted by both sexes, the better to build a sedentary society where each and everyone could fully develop by following the activity best suited to his physiological nature. A matriarchal régime, far from being imposed on man by circumstances independent of his will, is accepted and defended by him.

Amazonism, far from being a variation of matriarchy, appears

as the logical consequence of the excesses of an extreme patriarchy. Among the Amazons, their habits, the facts revealed, their dwelling place, tend to make us interpret their régime in the sense which has just been indicated.

If they are looked at closely, one can perceive that the Amazons – whether those of Africa or Asia Minor – lived exclusively among the Aryan populations of nomads, practising the most extreme form of a patriarchal régime.

The localisation in Africa of the Gorgons and of the other Amazons of Myrina has misled many minds. But if attention is given to details of the site, it will be noted that this was essentially in Cyrenaica (Lake Tritonis), inhabited by white nomadic Libyans, called Peoples of the Sea and of whom the early contingents were already on the spot since 1500 B.C.

It will be remembered that Cyrenaica was the birthplace of Athena and Poseidon, two divinities adopted by the Greeks, but that they were always considered as of Libyan origin. Poseidon was indeed the god of a people which came from the sea, as did the Libyans. It was on the Cyrenaican peninsula that there was a town called Hesperis. Finally, the distance between the shores of the Peloponnesus and Cyrenaica is shorter than that which separates this region from the valley of the Nile.

It is customary to maintain that the Egyptians in particular, and Africa in general, knew nothing of the horse, which originated from the Eurasian steppes before the invasion of the Hyksos. The domestication of this animal seems thus to have been primitively, the exclusive property of the Aryans. Now the horse was pre-eminently the mount of the Amazons.

The latter also practised cremation, so typical of the Northern cradle.

They fought against all the nomadic Aryans, and spared the Ethiopian city considered to be sacred, whose name evokes that of Menes, the first king of Egypt. Their queen became friendly with Horus, a sedentary king. In contrast she led an expedition against nomadic Arabs. The tradition seems, therefore, quite coherent, surprising as that may appear. The analysis which can be made of this seems to lead to the thought that the Amazons indeed issued from an Eurasian cradle, where a ferocious patriarchy reigned. This is the

reason why they revolted and why, following on their triumph, they were to fight everywhere against the upholders of that régime and were to spare, or even make friends with, the representatives of a régime where the members of their sex had always been allowed to develop freely.

It is wrong to suppose that there existed Amazons everywhere throughout the world. It is by an improper comparison that this appellation was given to certain *women of South Africa* on the pretext that they could fight as well as men, when they offered none of the other characteristics of Amazonism, particularly their contempt for men, etc.

Following a similar error there has equally been talk of the *Amazons of Dahomey*. A king of Dahomey, *Ghezo* (1818-1858), fighting against the Yoruba, suzerains in his country, used all the national resources at his disposal in order to win. It was in this way that, to free himself from the Guardianship of Benin, he was forced to create companies of female cavalry, who fought with such energy that modern historians have likened them to the Amazons. The fact that these companies were created and led by men, proves that the situation of these women was radically different from that of the classical Amazons, who could not conceive of fighting under male orders. There is no question here of an autonomous feminine organisation within a masculine society whose authority might be ignored. They are no more Amazons than the members of the auxiliary women's corps of modern European armies. All their attributes come from the men, who conceived their formation; thus they have nothing intrinsically the same or comparable to the self-determination of the Amazons. Hatred of men is foreign to them and they possess the consciousness of being 'soldiers' struggling only for the liberation of their country.

THE PEUL MATRIARCHY

The sociology of the Peul community is, without a doubt, of the greatest interest to the social sciences. There are few peoples whose study has caused so much to be written of them. The collection of apparent contradictions encountered among them has often discouraged scientists or led them astray. And today the most

extravagant hypotheses exist regarding them. Therefore the interest aroused by unpublished material can be understood.

The first difficulty which must be overcome is to arrive at an explanation, from the hypotheses on which this study is based, of how the nomadic Peuls could practise matriarchy. The opposite would seem logical. The answer is linked to a knowledge of the origins of this people. From where did they come?

There are two important facts on the basis of which it can be stated almost with certitude, that the Peuls originally came from Egypt and that certain of them even belonged to the royal branch of the ancient pharaonic dynasties. Indeed it is the ontological notions of *Ra* and *Ka* which are found to be the basic totemic names of the Peuls. Now the totemic name is essentially an ethnic index in Black Africa. *Ba-Ra*, *Ba-Ri*, *Ka-Ra*, *Ka-Re*, all these names used by the Peuls are composed, visibly, of Egyptian roots, derived from the most authentic and the most secret theogony. It is known that, until the proletarian revolution which took place at the end of the ancient Empire, only the pharaoh possessed an immortal *Ka* and enjoyed the right of an Osirian death.

Whatever was the real nature of *Ba* and *Ka* to the ancient Egyptians, the fact that they are to be found in the form of totemic names and without any possible doubt, among the Peuls, seems to confirm the theory of Moret, who wished to demonstrate Egyptian totemism, proceeding from an analysis of these notions.³

In another connection, Moret was to write about *Ba* and *Ka*:

The *Ka* who has just been united with the *Zet* is a divine being who lives in the sky and only manifests himself after death...

In the text of the ancient Empire, to express the idea of dying, the expression 'go to his *Ka*' is employed. Other texts make it clear that there exists in heaven an essential *Ka*... this *Ka*... presides over all intellectual and moral forces; it is he who, at one and the same time, nourishes the body, beautifies the name, and produces physical and spiritual life....

Once the two elements are united, *Ka* and *Zet* form the complete being who symbolises perfection. This being possesses new properties, which make of him an inhabitant of the heavens who is called *Ba* (soul?) and *Akh* (spirit?). The soul *Ba* represented by the bird *Ba*,

complete with a human head, lives in the sky... As soon as the king is reunited with his *Ka*, he becomes *Ba*.⁴

It matters little whether Moret's interpretation is correct or not; it permits us to emphasize the importance of these concepts in Egyptian thought.

It is thus not by chance that the name *Ka* is the noblest and most authentic of Peul names.

It has often been supposed that the Peuls were at first white people, who had become more and more Black by interbreeding. The analysis of the Peul language, its deep grammatical kinship with other languages of the African group (Wolof, Serere, Old Egyptian...), incline one to suppose the contrary.⁵ Indeed if present-day France were to become a Black nation by the progressive invasion of an outside element, even at the end of the transformation the mainstay of its culture, that is, its language, would remain French assuming that society itself had not been completely overthrown. The new mixed elements would continue to speak French. If the Peuls were a group of conquerors of a higher cultural level, propagators of a civilisation coming from no-one knows where, even in mixing with other peoples under such conditions of superiority it is their culture which should be transmitted and it is their tongue which should have been imposed on the African aboriginals, instead of the opposite being the case.

We are therefore obliged to suppose that they were originally genuine Africans progressively crossed with outside elements. Only this hypothesis makes the known facts intelligible, in allowing an explanation of why, in spite of their evident racial mixture, the Peuls speak a Black language which cannot be linked with any Semitic or Indo-European group and that matriarchy is at the basis of their social organisation, in spite of their nomadism. For the rest they have all the cultural traits common to the more or less mixed peoples of Black Africa, the Yoruba, Sarakolle, etc...

In so far as the Peul were of Egyptian origin, they were Africans of sedentary, agricultural habits practising matriarchy. Following the break-up of ancient Egyptian society – disappearance of sovereignty – they must have emigrated at quite a late date with their herds of cattle. Through force of circumstances they would thus have passed from a sedentary life to a nomadic one. But it can be understood

then, that the matriarchy of the first epoch would continue to govern social relationships; the more so since it is doubtless excessive to speak of an absolute nomadism of the Peul. In reality he was semi-nomadic; Black Africa is studded with villages of Peuls inhabited throughout the whole year. Only the younger people of the group walk behind the herds across whole provinces looking for pastures, to return to their starting point at the end of the season.

It could be objected that the names quoted are not the only ones used by the Peuls. Certainly, this is so: but they are most authentic since the Peuls do not share them with any other African people, while their other names can be used by members of different ethnic groupings. Thus *Diallo* is at one and the same time a name of the Peul and of the Toutcouleurs; *Sow*, of the Peul and the Laobi, etc.

This explanation permits us to understand the matriarchy of the Peul, his nomadism, his totemism, his ethnic origins and those of his language. The matriarchy of this semi-nomadic people ceases to constitute a valid objection to the theory maintained here.

AFRICAN PATRIARCHY

It is found that the present tendency of the internal evolution of the African family is towards a patriarchy more or less attenuated by the matriarchal origins of the society. We cannot emphasize too much the rôle played in this transformation by outside factors, such as the religions of Islam and Christianity and the secular presence of Europe in Africa.

The African who has been converted to Islam is automatically ruled, at least as far as his inheritance is concerned, by the patriarchal régime. It is the same with the Christian, whether Protestant or Catholic. But in addition, colonial legislation tends everywhere to give an official status to these private choices, as is attested by a verdict delivered at Diourbel in 1936 by the Commissioner Champion, regarding the inheritance of the lands of the village of Thiatou, near Gaouane: the dispute was settled in favour of Magatte Diop who succeeded in establishing her right to inherit, in the patrilineal line, in accordance with French law, to the prejudice of her father's niece, Gagne-Siri-Fall, sister of Dieri Fall, who invoked the matrilineal line, which was the only one valid, she maintained, for the *garmis*,

that is to say, the dynastic families and the nobility.

Finally, ancestral ties tend to become distended by the force of the exigencies of modern life, which dislocates the ancient structures; and the African more and more feels himself to be as near to his son as to his uterine nephew. But among certain people who have not yet had any real intellectual and moral contact with the West, such as the Sereres, the matrilineal heritage still prevails. The son gets nothing, the nephew inherits everything.

It is also to these three factors that it is necessary to impute the changing of the names of children, who cease to bear that of their maternal uncle, that is, of their mother, to take that of their father. It has already been seen that in 1253 when Ibn Batouta visited Mali, this important process had still not taken place in the African family.

POLYGAMY

As different thinkers, Engels among others, have already stressed, polygamy is the specific trait of no single people; it has been and continues to be practised by the upper classes in all countries, perhaps not in different degrees, but in different forms. It was customary among the German aristocracy of the time of Tacitus, in Greece at the time of Agamemnon, throughout the whole of Asia and in Egypt among the family of the pharaohs and the dignitaries of the court. In all these countries, without damage to the existing morality, this luxury was open to anyone if he had the means; but monogamy was the rule at the level of the mass of the people, particularly in Africa. In so far as Africa is considered to be the land of polygamy, it is important to emphasize this fact. In sculptural and pictorial representations, the monogamy of the people is proved by the numerous couples depicted.

It seems that this was so in all Africa during the late Middle Ages, until the tenth century, which marks the extension of Islam to the native populations, through the Almoravidiens. Polygamy tended in this way to become general, without ever ceasing to be a sign of social rank. Thus, it is not rare to see members of the lower classes who, seeking to deceive themselves about their own social rank, marry several wives.

It is to these notes about polygamy that it is proper to connect

the study of what has been called the ill-treatment of African women. Once again, it is the matriarchal conception which will enlighten us in an intelligible fashion regarding the facts. It implies, indeed, a relatively rigid dualism in the daily life of each sex. The socially admitted division of labour reserves to the man the tasks involving risks, power, force and endurance; if, as a result of a changed situation due to the intervention of some outside factor – cessation of a state of war, etc... the tasks of a man came to be whittled down, so much the worse for the woman: she would nonetheless continue to carry out the household duties and others reserved to her by society. For the man could not relieve her of this without losing prestige in the eyes of all. It is in fact unthinkable, for example, that an African should share a feminine task with his wife, such as cooking or washing clothes or rearing children, any European influence, of course, being disregarded. The diminution of the tasks of the man comes from the suppression of national sovereignties which causes the disappearance of a large fraction of the tasks of responsibility. This diminution can also be seasonal, as a function of cultivation and the harvests; in tropical countries, at two seasons of the year, during the long dry period, involuntary unemployment is frequent among men, whom the feeble economic activity of the country is unable to occupy. In the fields it is the husband who digs the land and the wife who sows. At the time of the harvest, it is the husband who uproots the peanuts, for example, and the wife who gathers them. In reality, rural preoccupations are far from being so rigid, and it is not rare to find a woman doing certain tasks which are not very arduous, such as cultivating the soil. But it can certainly be confirmed that the position of the man in this work is superior to that of his wife. Most often she prepares the food and brings it to the fields, while her husband works. The European travellers who crossed Africa like meteors often brought back piteous, striking descriptions of the fate of these poor women, who were made to work by their husbands, while the latter rested in the shade. In contrast, the Europeans who have visited Africa and stayed there for a greater or lesser period of time, are not sorry for the African women: they find them very happy.

Moreover this situation has been unchanged since ancient times: the couples to be seen on the African monuments of Egypt are united by a tenderness, a friendship, an intimate common life – the like of

which is not to be found in the Eurasian world of this period: Greece, Rome, Asia. This fact, in itself, would tend to prove that Ancient Egypt was not Semitic: in the Semitic tradition, the history of the world begins with the fall of man, his ruin being caused by a woman (the myth of Adam and Eve). In ancient Egypt and the remainder of Black Africa, in every age – except for some slight Arab influence – the isolation of women under the supervision of eunuchs, a practice so typically Eurasian, is absolutely unknown.

EURASIA

The extent of the field to be examined, and the multiplicity of facts to be considered, obliges us to discuss only the most outstanding of these.

NEOLITHIC MATRIARCHY

In the sixth millennium, after the Ice Age and the warming of the climate, men grouped themselves in fortified villages or in lake-dwellings. It is not known whether or not they were magdalenians from caves or just some new race originating in Asia. However that may be, the men of that period already practised an embryonic form of herding and agriculture. It is pointed out that among the animals which were domesticated were cattle, sheep, pigs, horses and dogs. And among the cereals cultivated (corn especially) the cultivation of flax provided the thread for weaving (clothing). The men of this period were thus semi-nomadic agriculturists, and specialists in prehistoric studies attribute to them the practice of matriarchy. This is the case with Menghin and Kern quoted by Turel:

This ancient form of agriculture is characterised by the clearing of the land by means of spades, by the perfecting of the axe, by the mace, the wooden shield, matriarchy and the lunar myths... The predominant rôle of the woman in the labour of digging was the source of matriarchy, which designates the concentration of human life around the source of its food. The woman, possessing the means of cultivation, acquires social predominance. The succession goes from mother to daughter and the mate enters the family of his wife...

The primitive cultivators were not so attracted to ornaments as

the totemic clans. They appear to have had less imagination and their ideas were much narrower. In contrast, they were prey to attacks of religious terror.⁶

In reality no explicit records exist of the organisation of the human family of 8,000 years ago. The above-mentioned conclusions have only been drawn by studying present-day societies which are still at the Neolithic stage and extrapolating the results found in ancient epochs. At best it has been possible to extract with more or less certitude, the existence, at this far distant period, of a fertility cult, thanks to the discovery of the steatopygous statuettes (the Venus of Willendorf and others) whose area of dispersion extends from Western Europe as far as Lake Baikal in Asia and to Japan. It is rather likely that the 'predominant rôle of the woman in the labour of digging' is exaggerated. From all time it seems natural that the most arduous work was accomplished by men, no matter what the latitude. It was certainly not women who manufactured the agricultural implements such as the spades, etc. Neither was it the women who must have broken the first virgin piece of land. The men must have done this work in addition to that of fishing and hunting, as is the case today in many primitive societies. The advent of matriarchy is linked to the fact that in a truly sedentary society, the woman, instead of being almost a deadweight on the society, can supply an appreciable economic contribution, without any common measure with that permitted by a nomadic life; it is discovered, immediately, that in such a régime, she is more fitted to transmit the rights of inheritance, than man. Indeed, even in a sedentary life, man is relatively more mobile and has fewer attachments than woman, whose social mission seems to be to remain in the home. The boy in an African family, for example, can be compared to a bird on a tree: he can fly away at any moment and is a potential emigrant who, even in certain instances, does not return to the home. He owes his actions to the girls who are attached to him: hence the matrilineal transmission of family interests. If man were to transmit them, it can be seen that they would soon be compromised and lost to the outside world. These ideas are very familiar to Africans who know their society well.

At the time of the lake dwellings, if we can judge by the importance of the systems of defence erected for protection from external nature – enemy number one – the precariousness of life must have

limited the rôle which a woman could play in society; she must have been petrified, not only by religious, but also material terror, constantly fed by the struggle for life, against animals, the forces of nature and neighbours. A number of pointers have led certain writers to explain the presence of the steatopygous statues, by the arrival and settlement in Southern Eurasia of Southern populations, perhaps African, during the Aurignacian age.

This was so in the case of Dumoulin de Laplante:

It was at this time that a migration of Africoids of the Hottentot (Khoikhoi) type, leaving South and Central Africa, might have covered North Africa, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt and brought with it by force a new civilisation to Mediterranean Europe: the Aurignacian. These bushmen (Khoisan) were the first to trace rough designs on rocks and to carve limestone figures representing very fat women, monstrous pregnant women. Is it to these Africans that the lower Mediterranean basin owes the cult of fertility and of the Mother-Goddess?⁷

The opinion of Furon, while slightly more nuanced, is nonetheless a sort of confirmation:

During this time, in Africa, and in the East, which know nothing of the Solutrian and Magdalenian Periods, the Aurignacian Africoids extended themselves directly in a civilisation, called Capsian, whose centre appeared to be Tunisia. From there it seems to have reached, in one direction, North Africa, Spain, Sicily and Southern Italy, disputing thus possession of the Mediterranean basin with the Caucasians and Mongolians; in the opposite direction as far as Libya, Egypt and Palestine. Finally it subjected to its influence the Sahara, the Sudan and Central Africa as far as South Africa.⁸

About the steatopygous statuettes which have just been mentioned, Furon writes:

All these statuettes having a 'family air', the idea of a fertility cult must certainly be admitted, since it would be unbelievable that France, Italy and Siberia were peopled by people of the same race, Africoids, of which the women were steatopygous.⁹

The presence of a southern Africoid element in Southern Europe during the Aurignacian Age is confirmed by the presence of the Grimaldi Man.

GERMANIC MATRIARCHY

As the Neolithic matriarchy of the North, if the German matriarchy were proved, it would tend to confirm that universality of this phenomenon. But in this, as in other cases, the scantiness of the records invoked to support it is of a similar order.

Nothing is more open to doubt than this Germanic matriarchy. Bémont and Monod, relying on the works of Caesar and Tacitus, say this:

The Germans did not know a dowry system, but the wives gave presents to their husbands.

The ordinary freeman had to be satisfied with only one wife; polygamy was only permitted to the nobility. In certain tribes widows were not allowed to remarry: 'a woman takes only one husband, as she has only one single life, to ensure that she loves the state of marriage and not her husband' (Tacitus). The father of a family had extensive rights over his wife, whom he could expel if she were unfaithful, whom he could even sell in case of necessity, over his children whom he could abandon, over his freemen and over his slaves; but this authority ceased in the case of his eldest son or his married daughter; once the father became too old he no longer counted as an active member, and it was the son who replaced him. The Germans know nothing of wills: the nearest blood relations inherited by right; the women were excluded from inheriting land. The sons were equal amongst each other: there is no certain trace of a law of primogeniture.¹⁰

It is difficult to consider as matriarchy a régime where, after all, the women gave presents to their husbands, while the latter could sell them in case of necessity and abandon his children; where she was excluded from inheriting land, where the son inherited from the father and not the nephew from the uncle, where the nearest blood relations inherited, to the exclusion of those of uterine descent. Since a married daughter left her father's authority and could be sold by

her husband, this implies that she was no longer a member of her natural family, contrary to what would occur under a matriarchal régime. We are thus in the presence of a patriarchal régime with its most atrocious exigencies, such as the abandonment of children: it is only under such a régime that a father can abandon his children when no longer able to feed them, for in a matriarchal régime his own children do not belong to him. In the latter case, it is the uncle who has the right to sell his nephew and the latter inherits from him: hence the expression in Walaf, previously quoted.

The abandonment of children and the burial of infant girls, considered as useless mouths to feed, were common practices throughout the whole of the patriarchal Eurasian world, where this often appeared as a harsh necessity. With ancestral habits helping, this practice remained customary among the Greeks even after their settling down, and they were stupefied to see the Egyptians raise all their children without distinction of sex, instead of abandoning an appreciable number at birth, as so much rubbish:

But once the desire of male posterity had been satisfied, they made no concessions to those born later. *The Greeks noticed, almost with stupefaction, that in Egypt it was the practice to 'raise' all the children: by this is meant that it was not the practice there, as in Greece to 'expose', that is to say, to abandon, the wailing newborn children among the refuse of everyday life.*¹¹

The only fact which subsists in favour of a matriarchy after a profound examination of Germanic society, is therefore the importance accorded to the nephew, especially in the matter of hostages, where he was preferred to the son. Now it is quite possible that this could have been a practice introduced by the Phoenicians within the framework of the commercial contracts they entered into with the Germans.

CELTIC MATRIARCHY

It has not been possible to speak of an Irish matriarchy except by associating with this custom practices foreign to it: thus Hubert quotes Strabo, who seems to take Pythias as his authority for stating that the Irish knew neither mother nor sister.

According to Caesar, the Celts of Great Britain had one woman for each group of ten or twelve men, composed vaguely of brothers, fathers and sons. Whoever brought the woman to the household was the nominal father of the children who were born. Here we are face to face with a type of polyandry which must not be confused with group marriage.

Polyandry is the exclusive property of the Indo-Aryans, with the exception of the Semites. It consists of forcing a woman, against her will, to assure the descent of a group of brothers or others. We have seen it flourish in Athens, as here in an Anglo-Saxon country.

It seems, extraordinary as this may appear, that the Arabs contributed enormously to the amatory education of western man of the Middle Ages. To them is owed the birth of court life.

Hubert explains the Celtic polyandry by the economic inferiority of the woman in the social system: from a material point of view the men were interested in introducing as few women as possible into the group. He remarks that Gallic women accomplished their military service like the men, whom they accompanied into battle.

It was the same with the Irish women regarding their right to landed property. They were gradually freed from this by the Christian Church. They began by buying themselves out of military service by abandoning half the property to the family.

'The normal family of the Celts, in spite of these exceptional facts and these relics of the past, is almost purely agnatic. The women are agents of natural kinship, but not of civil relationship. The son of a woman does not form part of the line of descent of his grandfather, except in one instance: that of a man having no male heir, who marries his daughter and reserves for himself the child yet to be born, who becomes legally not his grandson but his son. This family is grouped around a hearth, which has been the centre of its worship, and has not ceased to hold a central place in representing its nature and its unity.'¹²

The *patria potestas* (paternal power) of the head of the Gallic family was identical with that of the Roman. According to Caesar he had the right of life and death over his children.

This authority only ended with the death of the father among the Irish, and at fourteen years of age (age of military service) among the Gauls; following this the young man then came under the

protection of a chieftain. Still according to Caesar, as quoted by Hubert, the husband had the same right of life and death over his wife. Polygamy was customary.

The concubines, in Irish, 'ben urnadma', were bought at the great annual feasts, for the period of a year.¹³

The condition of the mother had no influence on that of her children.

The transmission of an indivisible asset, such as the kingship, did not descend from father to son. There was chosen, among the living relatives on the father's side, the one having the most right, a younger brother or, for example, a cousin.

As in all Indo-Aryan societies, Celtic society had its lower orders composed of 'déclassés' (especially those having lost at the winter games); of dispossed, expelled from the families to escape a blood debt or debt of money, etc. These 'without hearth or house' were very numerous in Gaul, according to Caesar.

The existence of the immense class of 'outlaws' leads H. Hubert to write as follows:

The Celtic world found in these institutions internal reasons of evolution which led it, after the formation of aristocracies, to create the plebs which tend to become democracies.¹⁴

There were also to be found the same blood customs such as the 'head-hunting' which was a cultural institution common to the Gauls and the Irish.

The author, quoting Posidonius, shows that the horsemen hung the embalmed heads of their dead enemies on the hindquarters of their horses. They used to boast of the large sums offered by the families of the dead for the return of these hunting trophies.

They have been found as effigies on certain Gallic coins.

The Celtic society is thus clearly patrilineal and endowed with all the other cultural traits relating to this custom.

Matrilineal descent always expresses an anomaly every time its existence is not in question.

'The descent of personages like Cuchlulainn and Conchobar

is indicated by the name of the mother. They were indeed of irregular birth and Irish law was precise in attributing to the mother's family the children born outside of marriage.¹⁵

ETRUSCAN MATRIARCHY

The existence of this would not be surprising if the profound meridional influence to which this people must have been subjected is taken into account. It remains, however, very doubtful. If the Trojan origin of the Etruscans is assumed, it will be remembered that Aeneas, when running through the ruined streets of Troy where he had lost his mother, tried especially to save his father and the domestic altar, the hearth, according to Virgil: the sacred fire of the altar was never allowed to die out, in spite of the long sea-crossing to Rome, where it served to found a new city, in the Aryan manner. It is known, according to Fustel de Coulanges, that the care of a permanent fire is specifically an Indo-European custom. It could be feared, at the most, that Virgil had retraced the Etruscan origins according to Roman ideas.

The presence of the figures of Amazons in Etruscan art is an additional argument against the existence of a matriarch in Etruria.

THE AMAZONISM OF THE THERMODON

The story of the tradition which follows is taken from Diodorus. On the banks of the River Thermodon, there once lived a people ruled by women, practised, like the men, in the art of war. One of them, clothed with royal authority, and remarkable for her strength and bravery, formed an army composed of women, inured it to the hardships of war and used it to subdue several neighbouring peoples. This success having increased her renown, she marched against more distant peoples. The good fortune which was still favourable to her during this expedition inflated her arrogance. The queen claimed to be the daughter of Mars, forced the men to spin wool and perform the work of women; she made laws, according to which the military functions belonged to the women while the men were kept in the humiliation of slavery. The women crippled the male children at birth in the arms and legs, so as to render them unfit for military service; they burnt away the right breasts of the girls so that their

prominence did not handicap them in combat. It is for this last reason that they were given the name of Amazons. Finally, their queen, celebrated for her wisdom and her warlike spirit, founded at the mouth of the River Thermodon a large town called Themiscyre and built there a famous palace. She was careful to establish a strict discipline and with the aid of her army she pushed the limits of her empires as far as Tanais. In the end she met a heroic death in combat, defending herself valiantly. Her daughter, who succeeded to the throne, anxious to imitate her mother, even surpassed her in many things. She trained the young girls in hunting, from their earliest years, and accustomed them to the fatigues of war. She instituted sacrifices on a grand scale to Mars and Diana of Taurus. Taking her armies beyond Tanais she subdued numerous peoples and extended her conquests as far as Thrace. On her return to her own country, laden with the spoils of war, she raised splendid temples to Mars and Diana and won the love of her subjects by the justice of her government. Afterwards she undertook an expedition in the opposite direction, conquered a large part of Asia Minor, and extended her domination as far as Syria. The queens who succeeded her as her direct heirs reigned with splendour and added even more to the power and renown of the nation of Amazons. After many generations word of their valour had spread to all the earth. Hercules, the son of Alcimene and Jupiter, received, it is said, from Eurystheus, the task of bringing back for her the belt of the Amazon Hippolyte. As a result, Hercules embarked on an expedition and won a great battle in which he destroyed the army of the Amazons... The barbarians revolted. Penthesilea, the daughter of Mars and the Queen of the Amazons, who had escaped the massacre, fought for a long time afterwards at the side of the Trojans against the Greeks, and died at the hand of Achilles.¹⁶

It appears from this text that the Amazons of Asia and those of Africa behaved in the same manner. Although of Eurasian origin, it was their own society for which they had an aversion. Their conquests were made in Europe and in Asia, but Africa was excluded. The last of them fought beside the Trojans, allied to Egypt, against Greece, which personified the patriarchal régime. After their first victories, they became sedentary, building towns and devoting themselves to agriculture, rejecting the nomadic life.

Their warlike ventures successfully concluded, the victorious heroines created homes for themselves, founded cities and devoted themselves to agriculture.¹⁷

Among the Amazons the queens succeeded to the throne systematically. This was the result of a reaction against the patriarchal régime; it was not the sign of a matriarchy. In the latter, to the girl, heiress and legitimate guardian of the throne by inviolable right, was associated a man – often her brother – who envisaged and executed the great decisions of national interest. There was thus no exclusiveness but a partnership. This is why the kingdoms of Central Asia, mentioned by Turel, must not be considered as ruled by a matriarchy:

Besides these fragments, vestiges of a system originally much vaster, the reports by Chinese writers about a gynaeocratic state in Central Asia (where woman was able to conserve her political and social dominance until the seventh century A.D.) merit all our attention.¹⁸

The technique of debasement of the men is the same: they spin wool. It is known that such was the occupation of the degenerate Asiatic king Sardanapulus.

That is to say that he wore the transparent gown of the Lydian prostitutes and occupied himself carding wool, like Sardanapulus and other Asiatic sovereigns of the same type.¹⁹

It is in vain the equivalent of these customs could be looked for in Africa and particularly in Egypt, leaving foreign influence out of consideration.

ASIA: REIGN OF QUEEN SEMIRAMIS

It is once again from Diodorus that we must take the story of the exploits of the legendary queen Semiramis.

Since she is the most celebrated of all the women known to us, it is necessary to show how, from a humble condition, she arrived at the pinnacle of glory. Daughter of Venus and a Syrian shepherd

according to legend, she was raised miraculously by doves, who had nested in large numbers on the spot where she had been abandoned. The shepherds, having discovered the child, gave it to the head of the royal sheep-folds who was called Simma; hence the name of Semiramis; others say that this name means 'dove' in Syrian. She was given in marriage to Menones, one of the king's courtiers, who took her to Nineveh and had by her two children, Hyapate and Hydaspe. In view of her intelligence, she was associated with her husband in all his work. The king Ninus embarked on the conquest of the province of Bactria. He besieged the capital, the town of Bactria, but was repulsed. Semiramis, who was in the king's suite, put her intelligence to work and produced a happy ending to the venture of Ninus, by finding a means of skirting the fortifications of the town, while diverting the attention of the defenders. This brought her the homage of the king, who asked for her hand in marriage, proposing to her former husband that he give her up to him. The king, who had threatened to blind the courtier, obtained satisfaction, but the latter hanged himself and Semiramis became queen. Ninus had from her a son, Ninyas. When he died, he left Semiramis as queen. To her is attributed, if not the founding, at least the improvement of Babylon.²⁰

Certainly these tales are legendary and it would not do to take them literally. However Semiramis did exist, as did the other legendary sovereigns about which history possesses few records: Menes, Minos, the Amazons, etc. Sociology, which seeks among other things to grasp the mental habits of people, far from being embarrassed by these legends, finds in them much upon which to reflect. By studying them it is possible to reach the social and sentimental attitudes of the people who produced them. Certainly, it would be necessary to know at what period the legend was born, if it is indeed characteristic of the historical period of which it is wished to attribute it. These ideal conditions being impossible to fulfil, there must always remain a large part which has merely been interpreted, which it is possible, at best, to attempt to restrict. But it is very necessary to proceed thus, if one wishes to try writing the history of these early periods of humanity of which very little evidence has survived.

Semiramis was not, like the African queens, a princess by birth, sanctified as queen by tradition. She was a courtesan of humble birth,

who was led to take power by favourable circumstances. She was thus an adventuress, like all the Asian queens. Behind them there was no matriarchal tradition.

Therefore in considering the three zones: Africa, Europe and Asia, the situation of the woman can be summarised as follows:

In Arica: including Egypt and Ethiopia, the woman enjoyed a liberty equal to that of a man, had a legal individuality and could occupy any function (Candace, Queen of Ethiopia and commander of her army). She was already emancipated and no public act was alien to her.

In Asia: by tradition, she was nothing. Her whole fortune came from adventure and a courtesan's life – at least in the region to which we have limited this study. Here the ideas of concubine and harem assume their proper meanings.

In Europe, during the classical age (Greece, Rome), no courtesan's adventures, no go-between and no accident could lead a woman to reign. She occupied a position similar to that of a slave, to the extent that, having no juridical individuality she was unable to serve as a witness, was cloistered in the gynaeceum, was unable to take part in any public deliberation, her husband had right of life and death over her, and had the right to sell her and her children, whom he could also abandon. However, the 'prostitutes' were the only women who enjoyed the esteem and the consideration of the intellectual elite, without, nevertheless, having the possibility of becoming 'courtesan queens' as in Asia. Such a woman was Aspasia, the mistress of Pericles, who dismissed his lawful wife to live with her, in spite of public outcry; such were also the Greek courtesan Agathocles, with Ptolemy IV Philopator, who killed his father and sister-wife Arsinoe, and other Greek women, the most celebrated of whom was Rhodophis.

The European woman was not even emancipated by the *Code Napoléon* as has been stressed by Engels; it was not until after the end of the last war that French women obtained the vote.

Returning to Asia, it can be said that, as in Byzantium, the succession to the throne was only regulated by violence and intrigue, to the exclusion of every idea of matriarchy. The Persian kings took the habit of naming their successors, while still alive, and often political assassination did the rest.

According to Maspero, Cyrus ordered his succession in advance

by designating his eldest son, Cambyses, who killed his younger brother to avoid having any rival.

Cambyses was also the first Aryan to marry his sister, according to the Egyptian custom, without it being known whether – taking into account his numerous epileptic fits and his depravation, related by Herodotus – this act did not arise from a sadistic and incestuous intention.

LYCIAN MATRIARCHY

According to Herodotus, the Lycians descended from Lycos, the son of Pandion, King of Athens; but the first inhabitants of Lycia were emigrants from Crete, under the leadership of Sarpedon, the brother of Minos. The Lycians named their children exclusively by the name of the mother.

Their genealogy was based solely on maternal descent and it was the social rank of the mother which alone classified the children among them. Nicholas of Damascus completes this information by adding details relating to the rights of succession which were exclusively reserved to daughters and which, according to him, arose from Lycian custom, an unwritten law which Socrates defines as emanating from divinity itself.²¹

It was not Sarpedon's son who succeeded him, but his daughter Laodamia. An attempt has been made to justify this Lycian custom, by the necessity of providing a dowry for the daughters. Turel recalls, regarding this subject, that in Rome it was repeated, *ad infinitum*, that the girl who married thus without a dowry could not be distinguished from a concubine.

The son, according to ancient testimony, receives from his father the spear and the sword. These must suffice to provide for the necessities of his existence. But if the daughter is deprived of her heritage, she would be forced to sacrifice her virginity in order to acquire the fortune which would secure a husband for her.

...and, in spite of the constitution of their people, essentially patriarchal in form, the Attic writers find that the best use than can be made of the maternal fortune is to endow the daughter with it, in order to preserve the latter from corruption.²²

There would have been nothing surprising in the Lycians practising matriarchy if they had, in reality, originated in Crete, as the tradition maintains. However, in the reported facts there is a major contradiction which must be acknowledged. In a matriarchal régime, as has already been seen, it is the individual who inherits, that is to say, the daughter, who at the same time receives the dowry, since it is she who does not leave her clan or her family. And this is absolutely logical and well founded on fact, when traced back to its origin. The fact of subordinating the heritage of the daughter to the necessity of endowing her at the time of her marriage, puts us in the presence of a patriarchal régime in full force, where the woman must compensate for her inferiority of rank by bringing a dowry to her husband. It is there to satisfy the imperious necessity of endowing the girls in all Indo-European societies, a necessity which led sometimes to their being killed off, or being got rid of by selling them, that they seem to have been led to agree to leaving them a legacy – a heritage which could serve as a dowry. It is in vain that one seeks in Greco-Roman society after it had become sedentary, a material reason outside the conditions of patriarchal life justifying this dowry; it is an extension of a custom which dates back to the period of nomadic life. In consequence, the Lycian matriarchy is, to say the least, doubtful. In fact at first sight it comprises two irreconcilable facts: on the one hand, the transmission of political rights by the daughter which is a sign of an authentic matriarchy, and on the other hand, the bringing of a dowry to obtain a husband, a no less sure sign of an authentic patriarchy. But can it not be said that such a juxtaposition of customs is proper to a zone of confluence such as Asia Minor?

CHAPTER V

A COMPARISON OF OTHER ASPECTS OF THE NORTHERN AND MERIDIONAL CULTURES

The comparative study of the Meridional and Northern structures and of their realisations can be generalised and extended to domains other than that of the family. The subject of this study makes it necessary to commence at this point. On the other hand, it was not unimportant to know, despite current opinion, which of the two sources had first offered to woman the possibility of self-development.

THE IDEA OF THE STATE: PATRIOTISM

The sedentary life and the nomadic life not only gave rise to two types of family, but equally to two forms of the state. Collectivism is the logical consequence of agricultural sedentarism. This led, at an early date (especially in the particular case of Egypt) to what André Aymard calls the *imperial vocation* of the Near East.

AFRICA

It is known that the form of the Nile valley demanded from the population, from the time they installed themselves there, undertakings and a general communal activity on the part of the nomes and all the towns to cope with natural phenomena, such as the floods of the river. The obligation to break the too-narrow isolating limits of the primitive family, that is the clan; the necessity of having a strong central power transcending the individual and co-ordinating the work, administrative and cultural unification, all this was implicit in the material conditions of existence. Thus the primitive clans soon merged, to become no more than administrative divisions (the nomes).

The state appeared with its apparatus of government perfected to the smallest details, without our being able to trace, except through legend, the anterior existence of a period of nomadic life. And this is valid for Egypt, Ethiopia and the remainder of Black Africa.

The feeling of patriotism is, above all, a feeling of national pride. The individual is subordinated to the collectivity, since it is on the public welfare that the individual welfare depends: thus private right is subordinated to public right. This does not mean that the individual is a negligible quantity and that the Meridional civilisations, in contrast to the Northern ones, put little value on human individualities or on human personality.

EUROPE

In Europe, among the Aryans, the nomadic style of life makes of each clan, that is of each family, an absolute entity, an autonomous cell, independent in all its purposes, self-sufficient from an economic or other point of view. In addition, the head of the family does not have to account to anybody, there is no authority higher than his own, no religion above his, no morality outside domestic morality. This situation, born during nomadic life, perpetuated itself for a long time after sedentarisation; Fustel de Coulanges showed that individual right among the Aryans was anterior to the foundation of cities, and that this is the reason why, for a long time, the state had no power to interfere in the private life of families, that is to say that in Rome and Greece during whole centuries a man could kill his son, his wife or his slaves, or sell them, without committing a crime against the state, which was then the city. Public authority stopped at the door of a man's house.

The time when man believed only in domestic gods is also the time when only families existed. It is quite true that these beliefs were able to continue afterwards, and even for a very long time, when cities and nations were formed. Man cannot free himself easily of opinions which have once taken control of him.¹

As the author remarks, these institutions, conceived solely for nomadic life, were to form a barrier to political and social evolution

for a long time after the establishment of sedentary life.

One can thus catch a glimpse of a long period during which men knew no other form of society than the family. It was then that domestic religion arose, which could not have been born in a society otherwise constituted, and which was even an obstacle to social development. It was at this time also that there was established ancient individual right, which was later to clash with the interests of a wider-reaching society, but which was in perfect harmony with the state of society in which it was born...

In death itself or in the existence which followed it, families did not mix with each other. Each continued to live separately in its tomb, from which strangers were excluded. Each family had also its own property, that is, its portion of land, attached inseparably to it by its religion: its gods the *Termes* (the boundary stones) guarded the enclosure, and its *Manes* watched over it. The isolation of each property was so obligatory, that the two domains could not border one on the other, and there had to be left between them a stretch of land which was neutral and which remained inviolate.²

Joint use, even between two houses, was a sacrilege. On the formation of the cities, the law of isolation prevailed.

Between two neighbouring cities there was something more impassable than a mountain: this was the series of sacred boundary stones, this was the difference of cults, this was the barrier which each city raised between the stranger and its gods.³

Nothing could be common to two cities. Because of the religion, no other form of social organisation than the city was possible. Each was sovereign, with its own system of weights and measures, its calendar, its feasts and its records and could not conceive of any overriding authority. When a town was conquered, says Fustel de Coulanges, it could be sacked, all the inhabitants killed or sold as slaves, but foreign sovereignty could not be substituted for that of its citizens and the town governed as a colony. The very nature of the institutions was opposed thus to the unification of the territories to form a nation.

It is thus, following on an outside influence, probably Southern

and Egyptian and aided by the changing conditions of life, that the Greco-Latins reached, little by little, the idea of a national unity, of an empire. Fustel de Coulanges correctly remarks:

If the political institutions of the Aryans of the East are compared with those of the Aryans of the West, almost no analogy can be found. If, on the contrary, the domestic institutions of these different people are compared, it will be perceived that the family was constituted on the same principle as in Greece and Italy.⁴

While the domestic institutions of the Aryans belonged to them in their own right, their political institutions seems to have been borrowed from outside.

This particularism of institutions, which did not provide for the case of the foreigner, and the xenophobia which was a consequence of it, explains the frenzied patriotism of the Greco-Latins. The free man, when a stranger in a town, at least until the first revolutions, was obliged to become the 'client', that is, the slave, of a citizen of the city which protected him. The idea of a stranger being free and enjoying a juridical individuality never occurred to the Greco-Latins. *To kill a stranger was not a crime; the laws making no provision for his case, he was unable to lay a complaint against anyone and could not be tried by any tribunal. A man was only a man at home.*

The little country was the family circle, with its tomb and its hearth. The great country was the city, with its Prytaneum and its heroes, with its sacred precinct and its territory marked by religion. The sacred ground of the fatherland, said the Greeks. This was not an empty word. This soil was truly sacred for man, since it was inhabited by his gods. State, city, fatherland, these were not abstract words, as in modern times: they really represented an ensemble of local divinities who were worshipped daily by those who believed in them with all their souls...

...Such a fatherland is not only a domicile for man; let him leave these holy walks, let him pass the sacred limits of the territory and he will no longer find any religion or any social tie of any sort. Everywhere else, other than in his native land, he is outside ordered existence and outside the law; everywhere else he is without gods and outside normal life. It is only there that his dignity as a man and his duty lie. Only there can he be a man.⁵

Greco-Latin patriotism, Northern, is therefore specifically different from Egypto-African patriotism, with regard to the reasons which are at their origin. The xenophobia of the Northern countries, in contrast to the xenophilia of the countries with a matriarchal régime was such that at the time of Herodotus, in the fifth century, only a soothsayer had as yet acquired Athenian nationality, while in Egypt, according to Fontanes, from the time of the twelfth dynasty, Black, White and Yellow men had already been admitted to live as equal citizens.⁶

As much as the strength of individual right revealed the existence of a nomadic period preceding the beginnings of the formation of the cities, so was public right, with time, going to take precedence over private institutions; and finally, the life of the individual was going to be completely subordinated to that of the state. In reality, individual liberty in the patriarchal age only existed for the heads of families. Later it no longer existed for anyone, with the strengthening of the authority of the city-state; the latter took charge of the education of the children, could direct each citizen to perform any definite task, exiled those among the citizens who were too virtuous (ostracism) and even intervened in their private feelings:

There was nothing in man which was independent... Private life did not escape the omnipotence of the state. Many Greek cities forbade the men to remain unmarried. Sparta punished not only those who did not marry, but even those who married late. In Athens the state could lay down the labour to be done, and in Sparta, the use of leisure. It exercised its tyranny in the smallest things: in Locri, the law forbade men to drink pure wine; in Rome, Meletus and Marseille, this was forbidden to women. It was common practice for dress invariably to be determined by the laws of each city: the government of Sparta regulated women's hairstyles, and that of Athens prohibited their taking more than three robes when travelling. In Rhodes the law prohibited the shaving of beards, in Byzantium, it punished by a fine anyone found to possess a razor at home; in Sparta, on the contrary, it required moustaches to be shaved off.

The state had the right not to tolerate malformations or deformities among its citizens. Consequently it ordered the father, to whom such a child was born, to put it to death. This law was to be found in the ancient codes of Sparta and Rome. We do not know if it existed in Athens; we only know that Aristotle and Plato included it in their

ideal forms of legislation. There is in the history of Sparta a trait which Plutarch and Rousseau admired greatly. Sparta had just suffered a defeat at Leuctra and many of its citizens had perished. On receiving this news, the parents of the dead had to show themselves in public with cheerful countenances. The mother who knew that her son had escaped the disaster and that she was going to see him again, had to weep and show signs of distress. The mother who knew she would never see her son again, showed her joy and ran through the temples thanking the gods. *Such was thus the power of the state which ordered the reversal of natural sentiment and was obeyed.*⁷

What indeed remains of the individual liberty which seems so characteristic of the Northern cradle since antiquity? Nothing, for the period in which we are interested; we have seen it ceased to exist shortly after the establishment of sedentary life, and that even before, it was only valid for the 'pater familias'.

After contact with the Meridional states and with the end of nomadic life, the Northerners were to conceive a particular type of state which remained marked by the after-effects of the preceding period. It very soon developed into a totalitarianism which in our day would be known as 'nazism' and which has no counterpart in the South, in Egypt, Ethiopia and the rest of Black Africa. It is quite probable that the Egyptian citizen was crushed under the weight of taxes and forced labour at the time of the construction of the pyramids, but he never knew this intrusion of the state in his private life. It is impossible to quote from the history of Ancient Egypt, Ethiopia or Black Africa, a single instance where the authority of the state had imposed the abandonment of children for the sole reason that they were born deformed, or had allowed any limitation on their birth. On the contrary, the respect for life and the human person was such that, according to Herodotus, when a Nubian citizen was condemned to death, the state was content to order him to do away with himself, but his own mother then watched, out of patriotism and civic duty, that the sentence was carried out and took it upon herself to do it if her son failed to do so. This recalls, it is true, the death of Socrates, condemned to drink hemlock. But the Southern influence, in Northern countries, was not confined to the framework of the state, it was also to be found at the legislative level, in the improvement of living conditions and the equality of the citizens. When Solon was

designated by the Athenians to draft a code which would govern their public and private life, he drew his inspiration officially from Egyptian wisdom. Plato relates that he went to Egypt to become initiated by the Egyptian priests who, at the time, considered the Greeks as children; in fact they were only younger in the ways of civilisation.

Could one reconcile the status given to the individual in Meridional societies, with the cases of human sacrifices found in them? In fact these latter are common to all humanity. Among the Greeks, in the beginning, the bodies of conquered enemies were eaten either cooked or raw; traces of this custom are to be found in the *Iliad*. Agamemnon, the commander of the Greeks, sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia, before leaving for Troy, in order to appease the gods of victory. His grandfather had already served to his brother, at table, the flesh of his nephews. This was, according to tradition, at the origin of the frightful destiny which overtook the House of the Atreus, that of Agamemnon. Among the Hebrews Abraham marks the dividing line; it was from his time on that customs became less harsh and that one saw the beginning of the substitution of animals for human beings destined for sacrifice. The replacement of Isaac, his son, by the ram brought by an angel, following the terrible divine command which tradition is at pains to justify, can only be interpreted in this manner.

In Egypt, scenes representing perhaps human sacrifice, which go back to prehistoric times, are sculptured on the Palette of Narmer, discovered by Quibell at Hierakonpolis. In contrast it seems that the Hebrews still practised sacrifices of this kind until the fifth century, at the time when Herodotus visited Egypt. They have also been reported among certain Germanic tribes.

In Black Africa, this only survived in a very fragmentary form, in Dahomey, in the Mossi country, contrary to widespread belief. As to anthropophagy properly speaking in the cases where it really existed, it was linked especially with economic penury, as was the case in Europe during the Middle Ages, or in antiquity for the armies of Cambyses marching against Ethiopia.

The difference between the two cradles therefore not only gave birth to two different types of family; it was also responsible for two types of state, irreducible one to the other. But the Northern city-state, which was a sedentary organisation based on ideas acquired

in nomadic life, showed itself less adaptable to the new conditions of life of the citizens who served it. It therefore explodes under our very eyes, so to speak, during the historical period, to give way to the Meridional type of state: that which one can call the territorial state, in contrast to the city-state, covering several towns and transforming itself at times into an empire. Such was the evolution of the Roman city until the moment of its apogee, when it could consider the Mediterranean as an inland sea: *mare nostrum*.

The evolution of patriotism was a corollary to that of the state, with the disappearance of Aryan xenophobia.

ROYALTY

The necessities of collective agricultural life required, at an early stage, the existence of a co-ordinating secular authority, which was not long in transcending society to take on a supernatural or divine character:

From the beginning, the king was god almost literally in order to bring to mind his all-powerfulness and his superiority over the common man. It was on the contrary the literal expression of a belief which constitutes one of the essential particularities of Egypt. This belief has, moreover, evolved since then, but it has never lost its force.⁸

King-god; this idea never seems especially to have struck the attention of the Aryans; the kings among them were, at the most, intermediaries between divinity and the ordinary mortal, to whom they transmitted the divine commands within the framework of a well-established ceremonial ritual. But they were in the eyes of all, and this even in the most far-off times.

At this time, when the social function of the Aryan king was still not superfluous, the latter, remarks Fustel de Coulanges, enjoyed a holy and inviolable authority. Royalty was well able to do without all the repressive apparatus needed by modern states to make themselves obeyed.

Royalty was established quite naturally, at first in the family, later in the city. It was not devised by the ambitions of certain people; it was born of a necessity which was manifest to the eyes of all. During

long centuries it was peaceful, honoured, and obeyed. The kings had no need of material force – they had no armies, no finances; but, sustained by beliefs which had a hold on men's minds, their authority was holy and inviolable.⁹

There reigned, consequently, a confusion between the priesthood and the secular power. One was really a priest-king, interpreter of the divine will, but not a god. When royalty was overthrown, and the religious beliefs remained, people turned to 'fate' to learn the divine will regarding the choice of magistrates.

Plato expressed the thoughts of the ancients when he said: 'the man whom fate has chosen, we say is dear to the gods and we find it right that he should command. For all the positions which touch on sacred things, we leave to the gods the choice of those who are agreeable to them and we rely on fate to decide'. The city believed thus that its magistrates were received from god.¹⁰

The reasons which presided over the choice of an African king and of the one who could be called his first magistrate, were quite different. It was not the gods who nominated the most suitable candidate, by the intermediary of drawing lots and on the basis of one knows not what criterion.

The choice of the African, whether he was ancient Egyptian, Ethiopian or came from another part of Africa, particularly the Bantu, was linked with the idea he had of the world of beings and of essences; thus to a whole ontology and metaphysics which the Rev. E. Tempels calls 'Bantu Philosophy'. The whole universe is divided up into a series of beings, of quantitatively different forces, which are thus also qualitatively different. From this is derived a hierarchy or natural order. Each of these pieces of essences, of ontological beings, appears to us in the guise of a material body, either animated or inorganic. These forces, said to be vital forces, are additive, that is to say, that if I carry on me in the form of talisman, amulet, – call it what you will – the organ where the vital force of an animal is supposed to be fixed (claw or tooth of lion, for example), I add this force to mine. For an enemy coming from the outside to be able to destroy me in an ontological and consequently in a physical fashion he must total, by similar means, an amount of vital force superior to that at my

disposal, now that I have associated with my own that of the lion. This universe of forces is governed by a weight, a sort of law of gravitation, which requires that the position of each body be naturally a function of the weight of the being, of its quantity of vital force. The opposite would break the universal harmony and the natural accomplishment of phenomena would be seriously disturbed. It is to an ontological disorder of this nature that is imputed the appearance of droughts, poor harvests, clouds of locusts and epidemics of plague, etc... Therefore it is order and natural harmony which requires that every living or inorganic being should be in its place, and particularly that man must occupy his own proper place.

Such is the necessity which governs the choice of the king. The latter must be, among all living people, the one having the greatest quantity of vital force. It is only subject to this condition that the country will never know any disaster. It will be understood why, according to Herodotus, the macrobian Ethiopians designated as king the strongest and healthiest one among them. An insight can also be obtained into the profound meaning of the feast of Zed in Egypt, said to take place at the ritual death of the king. When the king, at the end of a long reign and having reached a certain age, had really lost his vigour in the eyes of all, the question arose of renewing this by magic rites which, it was said, could only augment his vital force since at the end of the ceremony he was apparently as old as before. If his vigour had changed, this could only be in an ontological fashion in the domain which can be called, in a human being, his vital force.

It seems that, in these primitive times, the king was purely and simply put to death, after reigning a certain number of years, at the end of which it was considered that the vigour which permitted him to carry out his functions was exhausted.

During the reign ceremonies of the same kind were repeated. They were jubilees: but the meaning of most of them was richer than that of simple feasts. They were concerned with restoring to the king in their former vigorous freshness, the religions and magical forces on which depended the prosperity of the country. Doubtless these ceremonies represented an adaptation of the brutal customs which, in the beginning, terminated in putting him to death and replacing him by a younger successor.¹¹

Selgman has shown that this vitalist conception of ancient Egypt is exactly the same as that of the rest of Africa, even in the present day.¹² Among certain African peoples the king was in fact put to death after a reign – the duration of which varied, but in the case of the Mboum of Central Africa was ten years; the ceremony taking place before the harvest of the millet. Among the peoples who still practise the ritual of putting their kings to death must be cited the Yoruba, the Dagomba, the Tchamba, the Djoukon, the Igara, the Songay, the Wouadai, the Hausas of Gobir, of Katsina and of Daoura, and the Shillouk.¹³ This practice also existed in ancient Meroë, that is, in the Sudan at Khartoum, and in Uganda-Ruanda.

Such a king was at the same time a priest, who in Egypt, delegated his priestly functions to an official who performed them daily in the temple.

The African king was distinguished from the Northern king by his divine essence and by the vitalist character of his functions. One was a man-priest, the other was a god-priest among the living: the king of Egypt was indeed the hawk god Horus, living for the greatest benefit of all even in his sporting activities:

Hunting and fishing, he still carries out his conventional rôle of sovereign, since he always shows himself in so doing, skillful, strong and careful, while hunting at least – even crocodiles and hippopotami existed in the swamps – to clear the country of wild animals.¹⁴

The king in Egypt and in Ethiopia was also the leading farmer; he is often to be found depicted as digging the first sod (a sign of blessing?) to open the excavation of a canal. According to Caillaud, who discovered Meroë, he was called the first farmer in the land of Sennar, that is in Nubia. It was to him that was owed the fertility of the fields and the absence of social disasters of all sorts. It was also considered quite normal that he should take – ritually, so to speak – a fraction of the harvests of everyone, for the upkeep of his own family and his servants.

It was so in the early kingdoms until the administrative apparatus introduced corruption. Obviously the function of defending the country was also incumbent on the king, but in the agrarian meridional countries, during the long periods of peace, the military rôle of the

king was toned down and took second place after his priestly and agricultural rôle. Things went on this way, until the time when the Southern world was menaced and invaded by the Indo-Europeans, during the second millennium.

Numbers of the Egyptian sovereigns seem to have lived peacefully, and the frequent eulogies of peace, almost in modern tones, constitute not the least remarkable oddity in even the official literature of Egypt.¹⁵

Before the attacks on the Northerners, war was not a prerogative of the South, neither was agriculture that of the North. It was therefore, in all probability, on contact with the Southern world of the Aegean that the Northern invaders of Greece and Italy acquired, little by little, the habit of practising, of respecting and even finally of considering agriculture as something sacred, as is the custom in the southern cradle. There is indeed something contradictory in nomads making the cultivation of the earth into something divine. Thus many proofs exist to show that on the Italian peninsula it was the Etruscans who initiated the Romans, even including the ritual marking out of towns by means of the plough. *In Greece, tradition says that it is to Cecrops and Etyptos, both sons of Egypt, that one must go back for the adoption of agriculture as a national activity.*

RELIGION

In the domain of religion, as well, the difference between the Northern and Meridional conceptions is no less great.

Mircea Eliade, in his *History of Religions*, wished to show the universal character of certain religious beliefs, such as the chthonico-agrarian rites which were to be found more or less in all societies at their origins. However a thorough examination of the facts forces us to reject this point of view. It is inconsistent, for example, for the culture and religious thought of a nomadic people to commence by agrarian rites. It would therefore only have been after settlement that the Aryan nomads adopted, at the same time as agriculture, the rites and religion corollary to it. So that if allowances are not made for chronology, there is a risk of generalising beliefs which, in the beginning, were very strictly localized.

Eliade has clearly shown that with the discovery of agriculture was born a religion founded on a cosmic triad, become atmospheric: the sky, or father-god, through the rain, fertilized the earth or mother-goddess so that the vegetation-daughter could be born. These three cosmic divinities were not long in becoming anthropomorphic – meaning, to become incarnated in human beings – in the persons of Osiris, Isis and Horus, but a period when without any doubt the Aryans were still nomads and practised quite a different kind of worship, on which comparative linguistics allows us to shed some light. The evidence of Caesar is formal on this point and confirms that until a recent period, the Northern and Meridional beliefs remained distinct.

The practices of the Germans are very different: for they have no Druids to preside over the worship and scarcely bother with sacrifices. They count only the gods they can see and whose benefits can be felt, Vulcan, the sun and the moon: they have never heard of the others.¹⁶

From Tacitus we discern that the Meridional influence was already among the Suebian Germans (the Swabians of today) who 'made sacrifices to Isis', beginning thus to adopt the agrarian rites of the South. Vendryes has shown what was the extent and depth of his recent Meridional religious influence.

From Fustel de Coulanges we learn that the religious base of the nomadic patriarchal family was ancestor worship.

It is a great proof of the antiquity of these beliefs and these practices to find them at the same time among the peoples living on the shores of the Mediterranean and among those of the Indian peninsula. It is certain that the Greeks did not borrow this religion from the Hindus, nor the Hindus from the Greeks. But the Greeks, Italians and the Hindus belonged to one and the same race: their ancestors, at a far distant period, had lived together in Central Asia. It was there that they first conceived these beliefs and established these rites. The religion of the sacred fire dates, therefore, from the far-off and obscure period when there were still no Greeks, Italians or Hindus and when there were only Aryans. When the tribes separated from each other, they carried this worship with them, one to the shores of the Ganges,

the others to the shores of the Mediterranean. Later among these separated tribes which had no further contact with each other, one worshiped Brahma, another, Zeus and still another, Janus; each group made its own gods. But they all preserved, as an ancient legacy, the first religion they had conceived and practised in the common cradle of their race.¹⁷

According to the author, it can be seen that the gods of nature, such as Zeus, were adopted at a relatively late date, contrary to the opinion which says that their origin dates back to the time of the steppes and is based on linguistic analogies which are at least doubtful. In showing that there is nothing in their nature to prevent their being worshipped by strangers and that they are not xenophobic, he contrasts them with the family gods, which could not suffer the presence or the worship of a stranger. Domestic worship separated individuals even to the grave, for even in the after-life the families did not mix. For a long time this form of worship was supreme over others; Agamemnon, victorious general, returning from Troy, addressed himself first to his family gods to thank them:

It is not Jupiter he is going to thank; it is not in a temple that he was going to take his joy and gratitude; he offers the sacrifice of thanksgiving at the hearth in his home.¹⁸

In the beginning, the national divinities themselves were domestic, and belonged to private families.

It needed considerable time before these gods left the bosom of the families which had conceived them and regarded them as their patrimony. It is even known that many of them never were detached from this sort of domestic bond. The Demeter of Eleusis remained the private divinity of the family of the Eupolmides; the Athena of the Accropolis of Athens belonged to the family of Butades. The Potitii of Rome had a Hercules and the Nautii, a Minerva...

It happened in the course of time that the god of a family, having acquired great prestige in the minds of men and appearing to be powerful in proportion to the prosperity of that family, a whole city wished to adopt it and devote to it a public cult in order to obtain its favours. This is what happened to the Demeter of the Eumolpides, the Athena of the Butades and the Hercules of the Potitii.¹⁹

This private domestic character is a common feature of the Aryan and Semitic gods. Indeed, even after the triumph of monotheism in the human consciousness, Jehovah was to remain the god of his 'chosen people', as he was, in the beginning, the tribal god whom no stranger could worship. There is no universal salvation: He only loves and saves his own. Like Zeus, He is vindictive and irascible and makes His presence felt by thunder.* He must even have been, in the beginning, a sort of Agni god – fire worship – so typical of the Northern cradle. It will be remembered that it was in the form of a long column of smoke, a burning bush or some other volcanic manifestation, that He appeared either to Moses or the people as a guide. Fustel de Coulanges insists that, for a considerable length of time, the idea of a universal god never touched Greco-Roman thought.

It must be recognized that the ancients, excepting certain rare superior intellects, never represented God as a unique being exercising power over the whole universe. Each of their innumerable gods had his own little domain: to one it was a family, to another, a tribe and to a third, a city: this was the world which sufficed to the providence of each of them. As to the God of the human type, some philosophers were able to guess at it, the mysteries of Eleusis made it possible to glimpse at it for the most intelligent of their initiates, but the mass of the people never believed in it. For a long time man only understood the divine being as a force which protected him personally, and each man or group of men wished to have his own gods.²⁰

The inclination was probably not to monotheism, because Fustel de Coulanges counted the number of gods there were in Rome: they were more numerous than the citizens: *'there are in Rome more gods than citizens.'*²¹

What is known of primitive worship in this city allows us to say that the Latins did not, in the beginning, exhibit their gods. This peculiarity, instead of arising from a spirit of abstraction, conforms rather to the necessities of nomadic life. The same material reasons which necessitated the cremation of ancestors in order to render their

* It would be interesting to study the etymology of Thor, the expression by which the Semites of today (Arabs) designate Mt. Sinai where Moses spoke with Jehovah through the voice of thunder. Thor is the Germanic god of thunder.

ashes portable, forbade also the carrying of sculptured figures of ancestors or of other gods during the long journeys. It must therefore be recognised that the material non-representation of a divinity seems to originate in a Northern cultural trait. The Scythians themselves, in spite of their primitive state, only depicted Ares (Mars, god of war) in the improvised form of a sword planted on a heap of wood.

The religious situation was quite different in the south, in Africa. With the aid of the mildness of their physical surroundings, the Nubians and the Egyptians had, at an early date, more than a thousand years before the Greco-Latins and the Semites, the idea of an all-powerful God, creator of all living things, benefactor of all humanity without distinction, and of whom anyone could become a disciple and gain salvation. Such a god was Ammon who, until the present day, is the God of the whole of Western Africa: he is the one described by Marcel Griaule in his *Dieu d'Eau* (God of Water); Amma, God of the Dogons, is indeed the god of water, of humidity, of fertility. He has the same attributes as Ammon, in the Sudan as well as in Nigeria among the Yoruba. Plutarch, in *Isis and Osiris* thinks that the name signifies, in Egyptian 'hidden', 'invisible'. It can be remarked that, in a present-day African language like Walaf, whose kinship with ancient Egyptian is not to be doubted, the root *Amm* means the fact of being, which is existence, in contrast to nothingness.

However that may be, in Egypt the worship of Ammon was not long in enriching and making very important the caste of priests who served it. There followed the reaction of Akhnaton, surrounded by circumstances which are not very well known. Breasted considers this pharaoh as the first inventor of the purest form of monotheism in the history of humanity.²² The God Aton as conceived by him was not distinguishable by any form of statuary representation; the solar disc symbolised his power, and by its brightness and its rays gave fresh life to all nature. It had, therefore, one trait in common with the Northern gods, and certain historians are inclined to think that this fact could be linked either with the central origin of the grandmother of Akhnaton, or to the influence of his wife Nefertiti.

When Herodotus insists on the piety of the Egyptians and when he affirms that 'they are also the first to proclaim the doctrine that the soul of man is immortal', historians do not think that he exaggerates.²³

Certainly there can be found, as a particular trait in Egypt and in Black Africa, this unrestrained worship of animals, this zoolatry, which the Greeks jeered at so much, and of which André Aymard remarks that no traces were to be found in Semitic Asia. These beliefs – whether they are given the name of totemism or zoolatry – which make possible the identification of a human being and an animal, taken and analysed from the outside, misled, for a certain time, Western thinkers such as Levy-Bruhl. It was following a generalised study of these that the latter affirmed that the principle of identity ought not to operate among peoples whose members were capable of considering themselves at one and the same time as animals and authentic human beings; they would be ruled by a primitive pre-logical mentality, the difference between which and that of the civilised adult white male could not be made up by intellectual progress accomplished in a human lifetime. There were two distinct levels. The author before his death, retracted this and considered that the word 'symbolism' would be more exact to characterize this type of mentality.

In reality, only a knowledge of the ontology of the peoples under the reign of zoolatry would have allowed one to avoid falling into these errors. In a mentality where the essence of things, ontology *par excellence*, is the vital force, the exterior forms of beings and of objects become secondary and can no longer constitute a barrier either for totalling two vital forces or for identifying two of them, because they are equal quantities or because the beings they animate have been led in their existence to proceed to a social contract, a sort of blood pact. Thus, if the beauty of the plumage of the parrot or of the peacock attracts me, becomes confused with my aesthetic ideal, there is nothing to prevent me from choosing it, for this single particular trait, as my totem. I might also have been tempted to choose the lion, because of its strength, or the falcon, because of its vigilance... Evidently, all these choices which, in the beginning, were made at the level of the clan, express themselves by an identification of essences which is only conceivable by a vitalist mentality, governed by a philosophy of the Bantu type. And it is seen that it is not due to change that among the Blacks of Black Africa and the ancient Egyptians, who all practised totemism or zoolatry, that vitalism was at the basis of their conception of the universe. While in the Semitic

and Aryan world the association of an animal and a human being had, as André Aymard has remarked, only a symbolic character; in the African world the philosophy which is the basis of life, allows us to identify these two beings without contradicting the principle of identity, without our being able to evoke a prelogical mentality. Here, the exterior form is not the first reality, it is perhaps not illusory, but secondary, and no serious classification could come from it. The pharaoh and the falcon were one and the same essence, although enjoying different exterior forms: Diana's hind or the Gallic cock are only symbols, otherwise the Indo-Europeans would have known totemism.

It was within the framework of such thought, that were logically situated the philosophical doctrines such as that of the reincarnation or metempsychosis of Pythagoras. Herodotus, in paragraph 124 of his second book takes up ironically the attribution of this doctrine to Pythagoras. He says there that he knows someone in Greece who, wishing to give himself a reputation as scholar and philosopher attributed to himself this doctrine which was invented by the Egyptians, but who, by discretion, he does not wish to name.

The conception of life after death and that of moral values are the natural ornaments of religion and philosophy. In this domain the Meridional and Northern conceptions remain irreducible and bear, undeniably, the imprint of the cradles in which they were born.

In the nomadic cradle, where reigned an endemic state of war following on a lack of central power to decide between tribes and individuals, the defence of the group was the first concern. And all moral values related to war, contrary to all expectations for those people coming from the Southern cradle. It was only possible to enter the Germanic paradise Valhalla if one were a warrior fallen on the field of battle. In this case only did the Valkyries come to gather the body of the dead fighter and take it to paradise. But there as well the gods passed their time, to prevent boredom, in fighting among themselves during the day, and in drinking at night. They would all have died of hunger had not Frigga, the daughter of Wotan, cultivated golden apples for them in her garden. For the rest, the gods were mortals like other men; they were corrupted by life and were all to die so that another world, pure and regenerated, could again be born. Such is the thought contained in Wagner's *Tetralogy*, which was adopted in a particular manner by the Nazis, but which

is nothing else than that contained in the *Nibelungen*:

Those who fell in battle or who died of their wounds were admitted to heaven, the dwelling-place of the gods (Valhalla) where lived the Valkyries and where Fricka, the wife of Odin, received the heroes and presented them with the drinking-horn. The shades passed their days in fighting and their nights in feasting, and the German wished for no worthier recompense for his valour. Besides, these gods were no more immortal than the world created by them; they let themselves be corrupted, like men, through evil habits; they will then be condemned with the world and will perish, but in the same way as night follows the day, they will be reborn, purified, no longer to die. The elements of the primitive epics are to be found once again, mixed with ancient and Christian traditions in the Eddas, collections of Scandinavian traditions composed in Iceland from the tenth to the thirteenth century.²⁴

A young German had the right to shave his beard only by moistening it with the blood of an enemy killed in battle. Robbery was an honourable exercise in risk and hardening when it was committed outside the tribe, according to Tacitus.

The Greek Olympus is identical with the Germanic Valhalla as far as the moral values which reign there and the occupations and the sentiments of the gods are concerned. Zeus triumphed by force over the rest of the gods in a battle waged with the help of Prometheus. His soul was the seat of indescribable intrigues, criminal ideas and choleric outbursts. He recoiled before no injustice, no sentiment, however horrible it was, he, the master of Olympus, who could covet the wife of another god.

The Assyrian conception of the Beyond was very close to that of the Aryans; among the Assyrians, indeed, it was the soldier who fell in battle who went to paradise. Their cruelty was proverbial: it has been thought – and not without dread – that if their art is so anatomical, this is due to the deep knowledge of the human muscular system obtained in skinning their prisoners alive, especially the chiefs. Nothing was more commonplace among them than the mutilation of a member, the putting out of an eye or the cutting off of an ear or a nose.

In this way, during all the nomadic period and for a long time

after settlement in fixed abodes, the idea of justice seemed unknown to the Aryans. All their moral values were the opposite of those of the Southern cradle and were only to become milder on contact with this region. Crime, violence, war and a taste for risk, so many sentiments born of the climate and the early conditions of existence, all predisposed the Aryan world, extraordinary as this may appear, to a great historical destiny. When the Aryan threw himself against the Southern cradle to conquer it, he was to find it badly defended, without any notable fortifications, since it was accustomed to a long period of peaceful coexistence. It was after having been subjected to these first invasions that the Egyptians, particularly, raised fortifications, at the gates of their country, as at Sinai. It was following on similar circumstances that the Sidonians fortified their town, which was nonetheless destroyed in the twelfth century B.C. to give way to Tyre.

The Nubians and Egyptians of antiquity felt very comfortable in their own country and did not wish to leave it; they were not conquerors, but were distinguished by their spirit of justice and piety. When Queen Candace took command of her armies, it was to defend the national soil against the troops of Augustus Caesar commanded by the general Petronius. She fought nonetheless with such energy that Strabo said '*she had a courage surpassing that of her sex*'. Egypt only became a conquering and imperialist nation by reaction, by self-defence after the occupation of the Hyksos, under the eighteenth Dynasty; particularly under Thothmes III who is often called the Napoleon of Antiquity. He conquered Palestine and Syria and pushed the frontiers of Egypt as far as the upper Euphrates at Kadesh. For this seventeen expeditions were required. On the eighth he left Egypt by sea and landed in Phoenicia, had boats built at Byblos and had them carried across the desert to the Euphrates, which he was thus able to cross and defy the Mitanians. The renown of this victory assured him the subjection of those great warriors the Assyrians, the Babylonians and the Hittites, who all paid tribute to him. Consequently the Egyptian domination under Thothmes III extended to the foothills of the Elamite chain. The Egyptians practised at that time a sort of assimilation policy, which consisted of taking the young princes who were heirs of the conquered kingdoms, giving them an Egyptian education and sending them back home, so that they could transmit Egyptian civilisation.

The conquests of Shaka who is also called the Napoleon of South Africa of modern times are, in many respects, equal to those of Thothmes III.²⁵

The spirit of conquest seems to have entered West Africa during the Islamic period with religious conquerors such as El-Hadji Omar in the nineteenth century.

As to the attitude of Samory, it is to be compared with that of Vercingetorix. There was a national resistance.

It was therefore on contact with the outside world that Black Africa, as a whole, was to study ardently in the school of war, and to excel in this finally; so easy is it for the human being to adapt himself, especially when this is dictated by necessity.

To the mediocrity of living conditions offered by nature, the Northerners responded by religious conceptions of a meagre nature, strongly imprinted with materialism. They had, so to speak, no reason to be grateful to this hostile nature.

It was quite different for the Southern cradle which seems to be the favoured land of religious idealism. The Egyptian gods transcended humanity by their virtues, their generosity and their spirit of justice. At the birth of their nation, Osiris was already there, with his spirit of equity: in the beyond, on his divine throne, he presided over the tribunal of the dead; his absolute justice is symbolized by the scales of Thot and Anubis, which weigh the actions of the dead before rewarding them or punishing them. This is the same state of mind met everywhere in Black Africa; on this subject can be invoked the testimony of Ibn Batouta who visited the Sudan in the thirteenth century:

WHAT I HAVE SEEN TO BE GOOD IN THE CONDUCT OF THE BLACKS

Acts of injustice are rare among them: of all peoples, this is the one least inclined to commit these and the sultan (African king) never forgives anyone who is guilty of one. Through the length and breadth of the country reigns perfect security; people can live there and travel without fear of robbery or depredation. They do not confiscate the goods of white men who die in their country; even when the value of these is immense, they do not touch them; on the contrary, they appoint trustees of the inheritance, chosen among the white men and

it remains in their hands until the rightful owners come to claim it.²⁶

The ensemble of these moral conceptions and the social solidarity resulting from them gives to Black Africa the following triple character upon which one can ponder.

Black Africa is one of the lands of the world where man is poorest, that is, who at the present time, possesses the least; but it is the only country in the world where destitution does not exist in spite of this poverty, thanks to the existence of a rightful solidarity. It is also the first country in the world where criminal activity is weakest. It would be interesting to compare the statistics of crimes committed in the rest of the world with those – especially crimes of debauchery – actually committed by genuine Africans in Black Africa.*

LITERATURE

The accent will be placed on the essential difference between Greek literature and that of Egypt: the particular taste of the Greeks in developing the tragic style.

We can try to find the reason for this by disregarding the stimulation of the creative will of artists by artificial means, such as the awarding of prizes at the Olympiades.

The themes always deal, through the action of destiny, with a blind fatality which tends systematically to destroy a whole race or line of descent. They all betray a feeling of guilt, original with and at the same time typical of the Northern cradle. Whether it is a question of Oedipus or the Atrides and Agamemnon, there is always a flow, a crime committed by the ancestors, which has to be expiated irremediably by their descendants, who, from this fact and despite whatever they do, are utterly condemned by fate. Aeschylus tried to reduce the severity of this state of affairs by doing his utmost to introduce the idea of justice, which would allow an innocent posterity no longer to be punished, but to be absolved.

The Semitic conception is identical. The original sin was committed by the very ancestors of the human race and all humanity,

* If one reflects that in the U.S.A., according to a recent report of the F.B.I., a crime is committed every few seconds, the necessity of encouraging in Black Africa preventive sociological studies will be understood.

condemned from this time to obtain its bread by the sweat of its brow, had to atone for it. This point of view has been adopted and taught by modern religions such as Christianity and Islam.

If such a feeling of guilt had really invaded the Indo-European conscience to the degree shown in its literature, even at the present day, it must be admitted that there exists a sort of incommensurability between the Northern and Southern conscience. No idea to the African is so hermetically sealed off as the feeling of guilt conceived in this manner. No trace of it can be found in ancient Egyptian literature. Even to the Christian or Islamic African it remains a mysterious dogma which has never existed in his consciousness.

Since the manner in which this feeling of culpability is introduced in northern literature is always artificial, it could be asked what are the real motives, specific to the Northern cradle, which have given birth to it. Among other crimes could we invoke once more the second-rate place given to women in Aryan society? Did the Northern conscience feel guilty about her? A scholar could show this without difficulty by relying on an analysis of the tragic theatre of antiquity. The themes dealt with often reflect only this aspect. *Oedipus*, *The Suppliants* of Aeschylus, etc. In this latter play, it is necessary to note that the legend on which Aeschylus based his work – that of the Danaïdes – is of Greek origin. But a number of the scenes narrated take place in Egypt and it has been wrongly deduced that the legend is Egyptian.²⁷

However that may be, it is remarkable that the Egyptians did not create a tragic theatre. It can be supposed that their social structure, the manner of their life and their psychology were unfavourable to such a cultural activity.

THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY OR HELLENISM AND PESSIMISM OF NIETZSCHE

It can be said that tragedy, in its classical form, that in which it has been handed down to us, is the typical Greek literary form, not to say the Aryan one. If it is easy to discern at the origin of all traditions, an embryonic dramatic literature (the Mysteries of Osiris), it was only among the Greeks that could be found a moral terrain propitious to the glorifying of the form, and its elevation to the level

of classicism. The content of Greek consciousness was, and still remains, the natural raw material of all tragedy. We must think of the leading place occupied there by the strong feeling of crime, which by social reaction is often expressed by a horror of murder, the idea of guilt which is corollary to it, the retention in the male conscience of the discordance, unfair relations of the sexes, following on the social restraint of women; all these facts must be thought of if we are to understand that Greece was the chosen land of tragedy. One of the originalities of Nietzsche consisted in large measure in the posing of this problem.

We must appeal to all the aesthetic principles set forth up till now, to be able to find our way in this labyrinth which is the true origin of the Greek tragedy. I do not believe I am stating an absurdity in claiming that this question has still never been seriously asked, and consequently still less resolved, however numerous have already been the speculations attempted with the aid of floating scraps of the tradition of antiquity, so often shredded apart or re-sewn one to the other.

This tradition declares, in the most formal way, that tragedy came out of the tragic chorus, and that it was only, in the beginning, the chorus and nothing but the chorus.²⁸

According to Nietzsche, to give birth to tragedy, there was necessary the synthesis of a Dionysian musical element and Apollinian element which was plastic and intelligible. To demonstrate this he was led to give a particular significance to the satyr in the Greek theatre; he saw there a natural imaginary entity, contrasting with civilised man covered round with a sort of desiccated politico-social shell which prevents him from realizing this primitive identification with nature, sung by the chorus of satyrs; at the very least, it was in coming under the effect of its Dionysian music, and allowing oneself to be consumed by it, that it was possible to attain the state of ecstasy which permits one to grasp life in its primordial unity.

I believe that the civilised Greek felt himself thus consumed in the presence of the chorus of Satyrs, and the most immediate effect of Dionysian tragedy is that the political and social institutions, that is the gulfs which separate one man from the other, disappear before

an irresistible feeling which draws them back to a state of primitive identification with nature. The metaphysical consolation afforded us, as I have already said, by all real tragedy, the thought that life, at its basis, and in spite of the changeableness of appearances, remains imperturbably powerful and full of joy; this consolation appears with manifest clarity in the form of a chorus of satyrs, of a chorus of natural entities, whose life exists in an almost indelible manner behind all civilisation; who in spite of the metamorphoses of generations and the vicissitudes of the history of peoples, remain eternally unaltered.

The profound soul of the Hellene is fortified by the accents of this chorus, this soul so incomparably fitted to feel either the slightest or the most cruel sufferings; it had contemplated, with a penetrating eye, the terrible cataclysms of what is called the history of the world and had recognised the cruelty of nature; it found itself then exposed to the danger of aspiring to the Buddhist annihilation of the will. Art saved it and through art – life reconquered it.²⁹

Unfortunately, the ecstatic rapture of the Dionysian state stops with the music, and the reality of everyday life reappears in all its nakedness and with all that it contains of cruelty and deception; while this short vision of 'pure truth' is sufficient to destroy the will and make all human activity appear almost absurd.

In this sense, Dionysian man is similar to Hamlet; both looked into the essence of things with a determined eye; they looked and were disgusted by action because their activity could change nothing of the eternal essence of things: it seemed to them ridiculous or shameful that it be their business to put right a world out of order. Knowledge kills action and for the latter the mirage of illusion is necessary – that is what Hamlet teaches us. It is not the cheap wisdom of Hans the dreamer who, by thinking too much and as if by an excess of possibilities, cannot bring himself to act; it is not thought, no! – it is real knowledge, the vision of the horrible truth, which destroys all impulse, all motive for acting, in Hamlet as well as in Dionysian man.

Then no consolation can any longer prevail; desire leaps over a whole world towards death and despises the gods themselves; existence is denied, and with it the false reflection of its image in the world of gods or in an immortal beyond. Under the influence of the truth beheld by him, man no longer discerns now from

anywhere anything but the horrible and absurd of existence; he understands now what is symbolic in the fate of Ophelia; he can now recognise the wisdom of Silenus, the god of the forests; disgust mounts to his throat and in this imminent danger of the will, art appears like a saviour bringing a healing balm; it alone has the power to transmute this disgust of what is horrible and absurd in existence into ideal images, with the aid of which life is rendered possible. These images are the sublime, where art masters and subdues the horrible and the comic, where art delivers us from the disgust with the absurd. The chorus of satyrs of the dithyramb was the salvation of Greek art; the accesses of despair, evoked just now, disappeared thanks to the mediating world of these companions of Dionysius.³⁰

For the author, the satyr, like the shepherd of modern idylls, symbolises an aspiration towards the original primitive state: it represents nature still free from all taint of knowledge, still not violated by any civilisation. So, in the eyes of the Greeks, it was exactly the opposite of a mere puppet.

The satyr...symbolises the whole of the sexual power of nature that the Greek had learnt to regard with an apprehensive and respectful amazement.³¹

Nietzsche, until this, had only stressed the effect of tragedy, that is to say, of Dionysian music, by plastic Apollonian means, on the soul of the civilised Greek. After having insisted on this salutary effect, he penetrated more deeply into the subject matter of the drama to bring out the sentiments which are the basis of it and which serve to support it. They are the same as those mentioned above; the feeling of crime, guilt, original sin and then, although less clearly expressed, a terrible feeling of embarrassment towards woman, who has been made the scapegoat of Aryan society. All these sentiments are specifically Indo-Aryan and Semitic; Nietzsche insists on them in the case of both peoples, in different degrees, to account for the pessimistic ideas which are at the foundation of their conception of the universe and of civilisation. It is in an analysis of the legend of Prometheus that he finds the arguments permitting him to support this point of view:

The legend of Prometheus is an original property of the entire Aryan race and a document which testifies to its faculty for the profound and the tragic; and it would not even be difficult to believe that this myth had the same characteristic significance as the legend of the fall of man had for the Semitic race, and that there existed between these two myths a degree of kinship similar to that between brother and sister. The origin of this myth of Prometheus is the inestimable value accorded by a naïve humanity to fire... But that man could have fire freely at his disposal and that he did not receive it as a ray of light, seemed to the primitive soul to be a sacrilege, as stealing from divine nature. Whatever humanity could acquire of the highest and most precious it obtained through a crime and it must thereafter accept the consequences, that is, the torrent of ills and torments with which the angry immortals must afflict the human race in its noble ascension. This is a harsh thought which, by the dignity it confers on crime, contrasts strangely with the Semitic myth of the fall of man, where curiosity, lying, covetousness, in short a whole procession of the more specially feminine sentiments are regarded as the origin of evil. What distinguishes the Aryan conception is the sublime idea of effective sin considered as the true Promethean virtue; and this furnishes us at the same time with the ethical foundation of pessimistic tragedy; the justification of human suffering, the justification not only of the transgression of man, but also of the evils which are a consequence of it.³²

In the beginning tragedy was therefore entirely a setting for human suffering whatever the cause of this: Nietzsche is categorical: the primitive hero of all Greek tragedy is Dionysus, later heroes are only his masks, his transfigurations. In the same way the Dionysian tragic element of the drama was gradually whittled down from this beginning. The individualization of the general types, the refinement of the psychological study of the characters by Sophocles, the imitation of the myth by Euripides, in short, the advent of the *Deus exmachina*, succeeded in destroying the ancient tragedy:

It is an indisputable tradition that Greek tragedy in its oldest form had as a sole object the sufferings of Dionysus, and that during the longest period of its existence, the only hero on the stage was precisely Dionysus. But it can be affirmed with equal certitude that before and until the time of Euripides, he never ceased to be the tragic hero,

and that all the celebrated personages of the Greek theatre, Prometheus, Oedipus, etc., are only disguises of the original hero, Dionysus. That behind these disguises is hidden a god, such is the essential cause of the typical ideality, so often admired, of these glorious figures...

In this way we possess all the constituents of an idea of a profound and pessimistic world, and at the same time also the teaching of the mysteries of the tragedy.

What then was your purpose, O sacrilegious Euripides, when you tried to enslave once more this dying person? He perished in your brutal hands and you then had recourse to a disguise, an imitation of the myth...

We recognize on the other hand, the action of this anti-Dionysian spirit, enemy of the myth, in the growing importance of psychological refinements and of the depiction of characters in the tragedy of Sophocles. The character must no longer be generalized, developed into an eternal type, but must on the contrary act individually by accessory traits and artificial shades of meaning, in the most scrupulous precision of all the lines, so that the spectator no longer receives an impression of the myth but that of a striking natural truth and the power of imitation of the artist....

But it is in the denouement of the dramas that is most clearly manifested the new anti-Dionysian spirit. The end of ancient tragedy evoked the metaphysical consolation outside of which the taste for tragedy remains inexplicable; these harmonies of peace from another world, it is perhaps from an Oedipus at Colonus that they resonnate most purely. Now the spirit of music has abandoned tragedy and the latter is dead, in the strict sense of the word; for where can one henceforth derive this metaphysical consolation?

So, to the tragic discord, a satisfactory earthly ending was sought; the hero, after having been sufficiently tortured by fate, obtained by a fine marriage, by divine tokens of esteem, a well deserved reward. The hero had become a gladiator to whom, after he had been appropriately flayed and covered with wounds, was eventually accorded his liberty, the 'Deus ex machina' has replaced the metaphysical consolation.³³

The explanation of the birth of the tragedy by Nietzsche remains, in spite of everything, inadequate; the reader finds many difficulties in the way of grading the rôles of music and of suffering, in the conception of the author. Is it the pure form of music, with its divine

Wagnerian effects on the soul, or is it human suffering, of which music is only the particular tragic expression, which is the fundamental element? The author would seem to prefer the first hypothesis, when the second seems more justifiable. The delicacy and nuance of his thoughts do not allow his point of view to be confused with that of de Gobineau on the birth of art in general. The latter states without ambiguity that, wherever there exists a valid art, it is the result of a synthesis of two complementary factors: the one of Black origin and arising from sensibility, the inferior aspect of the human being; the other, or Aryan origin and arising from reason, from the cerebral, the superior side of the human being. It is tempting to identify this double aspect with the Dionysian and Apollonian components of Nietzsche. And if this is so, Nietzsche's book could have been entitled not *The Birth of Tragedy*, which is restrictive, but *The Birth of Art*.

It seems more satisfactory to consider tragedy as the staging of the most distressing ideas, of the destiny of a people, by a privileged member, that is, a rational artist, whose soul has been able to serve as a repository for all the collective emotions. In this case, music, or rather the musicality of dramatic expression, is only the reflection of a reality profoundly experienced and transposed to the stage.

By proceeding chronologically from this hypothesis another explanation could be attempted.

One first idea seems out of the ordinary. Why did the Greeks choose, not a native myth, but the foreign legend of Dionysus? For Dionysus is indeed a foreign God, easily identified with Osiris, whether one starts with the Greek tradition or that of Egypt. Nietzsche himself remarks that, according to legend, Dionysus was cut in pieces and thrown to the winds by the Titans, during his childhood; his mother Demeter was plunged into mourning and was only to be comforted on learning that she could again give birth to a Dionysus: the god was to be reborn. When he was cut into pieces he was worshipped under the name of Zagreus. There can easily be recognised in this 'Greek' legend the myth of the death and the resurrection of Osiris, cut into pieces and scattered by his brother Seth; the latter representing the god of evil, of sterility and of jealousy. In the same way Osiris was reborn. According to Herodotus, the Egyptians considered Osiris and Dionysus as identical.

...for the Egyptians do not all worship the same gods, excepting Isis and Osiris, the latter of whom they say is the Grecian Dionysus.³⁴

The 'father of history' is convinced of the foreign origin of the god, for all his attributes are in contrast to the manners and customs of the Greeks. He is an adopted figure. How did he arrive on the national soil? Herodotus tell us this:

Melampus, the son of Amytheon, cannot, I think, have been ignorant of this ceremony – nay, he must, I should conceive, have been well acquainted with it. He it was who introduced into Greece the name of Bacchus, the ceremonial of his worship, and the procession of the phallus. He did not, however, so completely apprehend the whole doctrine as to be able to communicate it entirely, but various sages since this time have carried out his teaching to greater perfection. Still it is certain that Melampus introduced the phallus, and that the Greeks learnt from him the ceremonies which they now practise. I therefore maintain that Melampus, who was a wise man and had acquired the art of divination, having become acquainted with the worship of Bacchus through knowledge derived from Egypt, introduced it into Greece, with a few slight changes, at the same time that he brought in various other practices. For I can by no means allow that it is by mere coincidence that the Bacchic ceremonies in Greece are so nearly the same as the Egyptian – they would then have been more Greek in their character, and less recent in their origin. Much less can I admit that the Egyptians borrowed these customs, or any other, from the Greeks...³⁵

It can thus be seen how Dionysus, the Egyptian national god, was introduced at a late date into Greece and the rest of the Northern Mediterranean. He probably used a land route, which would explain the numerous inscriptions relating to his worship which are to be found in Thrace and to which Grenier makes allusion. But no fact, no other tradition would permit us to situate his origin in Thrace or in Asia. We must now examine his attributes, which contrast so clearly with Greek and Aryan customs in general. They explain, at the same time, the indescribable enthusiasm with which the women welcomed him, and the resistance to the pitiless struggle which the men in the Aryan Mediterranean put up against him.

The Indo-Europeans experienced a great deal of trouble to present clearly and faithfully the myth of Dionysus, without transforming it by making it coarse, immoral, lewd, etc., when the spirit, the nature of Dionysus 'mounted on his panther' is opposed to lust. As has been shown by Turel, Dionysus is not the god of anarchy in the domestic life, the conjugal union is sacred to him, as well as the fidelity of those who are married, but he is the enemy of physical restraint, of all that which is anti-natural; he is on the side of the development of human beings and, in particular, of that of woman. He is the god whose teaching contains all the secret aspirations of the Aryan woman, so constrained and stifled by society. He is the god of individual liberty, of the duality of sexes in the human order. To present him in the form of a Bacchus, god of wine, always drunk and in search of lewd pleasures without end is, so to speak, a sacrilege. Dionysus is none other than the exportation to the Aryan countries of the Meridional social, conjugal and domestic ideal. From that time the myth throws a garish light on reality; the enthusiasm of the women, as much as the resistance of the men, is explained in Greece, as in Rome: the women, married or not, who practised the worship of Dionysus were condemned to death by their guardians. We are present here at a dramatic aspect of the struggle between the meridional and Aryan values to take hold of human consciousness. The degree of a civilisation is measured by the relations between the man and the woman. Dionysus is the liberator of the Aryan woman; he spreads his teachings in Greece, at the moment when one could see in this country two brothers marrying the same woman to ensure the only thing which counted in the Aryan world – a line of descent.

Those among modern sociologists who compare, perhaps unconsciously, technical progress and moral progress, cannot avoid distorting, in the inferences they draw from their enquiries in meridional countries even today, this moral advantage of matriarchal agricultural societies, in explaining the place occupied by women in these by the sway of a primitive instinct still solidly rooted in the coarse materiality of the earth – Dionysian goddess of fertility like Isis – in contrast to the spirituality of the ethereal regions where Apollo reigns without dispute: the god of pure reason who has no need of woman to give birth to Hera, his daughter.

Other sociologists, on the other hand, restore to this set of beliefs their real significance.

The mysteries (of *Dionysus-Bacchus*) which had deposed much of the former transport were a worship of natural fertility, of generation and of life. But it is no longer a question of terrestrial life;...³⁶

Certainly, at the moment of initiation, among other practices linked with agricultural life and the worship of fertility, 'there is uncovered the phallus hidden under a piece of cloth; it is made to fall, with other symbols, on the bowed recipient. The effect of these ceremonies was, in likening the bacchant to his god, to assure his eternal bliss.'³⁷

To Grenier, who quoted Cumont, the mysteries of Bacchus, which were thus practised in Rome, were of Egypto-Asiatic origin. The liturgic material of this worship is a collection of fertility symbols, which is the opposite of pornographic representations; these are the elements of an agrarian religion. The processions, at the time of the feasts of Dionysus in Egypt, such as are described by Herodotus, *are exactly the same, to the last detail, as the processions which accompany, on the 25th of December, the lamps in Senegal*: these are processions celebrating the birth of Christ, but it was most probably not the Western Christians who introduced these particular rituals to Africa, unless the Meridional 'carnivals' of Europe had this character, which would have to be verified. It is therefore probable that there is here a juxtaposition of two fragments of traditions, apparently different, but both fundamentally sacred. It seems essential, to reproduce the passage of Herodotus to which allusion is made, to make fast the ideas and facilitate research.

...In other respects the festival is celebrated almost exactly as Bacchic festivals are in Greece, excepting that the Egyptians have no choral dances. They also use instead of phalli, another invention consisting of images a cubit high, pulled by strings, which the women carry round to the villages. A piper goes in front and the women follow, singing hymns in honour of Bacchus. They give a religious reason for the peculiarities of the image.³⁸

Now that the moral nature of the gods has been sufficiently revealed at the same time as the Meridional and Aryan domestic conceptions, there can be seen more clearly the catastrophes and upheavals

which the teaching of Dionysus must have produced in the Indo-European societies; it must have broken the bronze armour with which the Aryan man surrounded these, opened the floodgates of the feminine consciousness, brought the exaltation and hope of the woman to their highest degree, and posed with the conscience of the Aryan man the gravest problem he had ever had to solve. Life on the Eurasian steppes, under the conditions of nomadism – it has been seen – had given him the habit of seeing in woman less a companion in society than an instrument for ensuring his descent, of paying a debt to his ancestors by prolonging the racial line and in not letting it die out with him, in assuring thus his immortality. Here economic conditions are essentially concerned: they have imposed this style of life and the religious and moral superstructure pertaining to it. But man is established in sedentary life; it goes without saying that most of the ideas inherited from the nomadic life have become inadequate, particularly the social ideas, if one may say so. The drama comes from the acquisition of new habits: a conscience cannot be cleansed by wiping it over with a sponge. The only ideas suitable for the new style of life are foreign ideas fashioned in the agricultural sedentary Meridional world at the same time. The shock of these on the Aryan's consciousness was to produce the most terrible upheaval that had ever been experienced. These are not simply imaginary views or gratuitous speculations. It has been seen that in the reality of everyday life, in Rome as in Greece, this shock gave rise to a definitive reaction, which went as far as murder among the men, since it is impossible to over-estimate the number of women actually condemned to death for the simple fact that they had become disciples of Dionysus. But a practical attitude, provisionally efficacious, is insufficient to resolve such a deep and delicate problem of social morality. This must, therefore, inevitably be placed and thought over again on the higher level of art and of philosophy; only at this level, where serenity of mind is more guaranteed, can one try to find a solution of a permanent character, and in default of this, pose the problem, in a more or less veiled fashion, without resolving it. Such a transposition of reality is peculiar to art, and it can be understood how the Greek tragedy had found its favourite theme in the myth, however foreign, of Dionysus. By its double character it was more suitable than the indigenous legends. Dionysus,

or Osiris, is the god who suffered, physically speaking, in so far as he was hacked to pieces. The Egyptians only showed this aspect of the physical suffering of Osiris, reflected in the moral suffering of Isis. As Nietzsche has underlined, Dionysus is a prototype; he was to be the divine disguise which would cover all forms of suffering of the human conscience among the Greeks; Prometheus, Oedipus, etc., are only replicas of him. But it is impossible to stage Dionysus without transposing on him, consciously or unconsciously, the social conflict born of the eruption of the god into the Aryan world. It is this aspect of the problem which shows through in the choirs of satyrs. The rôle of the satyrs symbolises a social situation, a problem that the Greeks seem to have been apprehensive of facing correctly or suitably; they were thus led to deform it, to disfigure it, to the point that at first sight it becomes unrecognizable, by parodying the rôle of the satyrs. The satyr is a Greek creature, added to the Egyptian myth of Osiris, of Dionysus.

As has been stressed by Nietzsche, the fundamental character of the myth was to become blurred in the later theatre of Greece: it was scarcely to be detected in the permanence of the subjects dealt with, the tragedies bearing almost without exception the names of women as titles. Euripides who, moreover, dealt with almost the same subjects as Aeschylus and Sophocles, wrote *Helen*, *The Phoenician Women*, *The Trojan Women*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, *Electra*. Even where apparently, as in *Oedipus*, the title is a masculine name, the content varies little and one is brought back by some indirect means, to the same problem.

The analysis of the legend of Prometheus led Nietzsche to make of effective criminality a constitutional element of the Aryan consciousness.* By going deeply into the myth of the blacksmith in Black Africa and in Ancient Egypt, we arrive easily at a hero equivalent to Prometheus, the fire-stealer and benefactor of humanity by the new techniques he brings. Here also the idea of crime is not absent, but it is diminished and reduced rather to the level of a grave mistake – a sort of indiscretion committed with regard to the gods. Its consequences would only be fatal to the descendents of the man who

* Let us remember the combats of the gladiators which were a national sport. 'Christians' covered with pitch whose bodies were transformed into lighted torches illuminated the gardens of Nero; so many crimes were committed at the very apogee of Roman civilisation.

committed it and they would be restrictive; there would in no way arise any feeling of permanent guilt weighing on the whole of humanity and obliging the latter to create for itself a pessimistic universe. The universe of the Meridional world is optimistic. Osiris had no feeling of guilt, neither has his son Horus, nor his wife Isis. *Seth, the criminal, is the only one who could have this: it is he who is the personification of evil and only he, to the exclusion of all the rest of right-thinking humanity, will suffer the consequences.*

The sentiment of Aryan guilt is the same as the Semitic sin arising from the 'fault of a woman' and certain exegetists see in this the result of knowledge: knowledge = consciousness of good and evil. The apple which Adam was made to eat by Eve could only symbolize that. On these grounds it is really through his knowledge that Prometheus became a sinner and a criminal: Nietzsche does not make this comparison since for him knowledge and the determined contemplation of pure truth must lead to inactivity, if there were not the magic art as succour.

Here also the explanation of Aryan criminality, of Semitic sin, does not stand up to comparison and analysis. It cannot be denied that the ancient Egyptians had acquired knowledge of a degree required by the foregoing exegeses. They would then, in consequence, have acquired the same sense of guilt, contracted the same notion of sin, extending to every human being, if such were the fatal corollary, in the human conscience, of the acquisition of knowledge. It was certainly otherwise and the Egyptian mental universe – and the Meridional, in general – is quite optimistic, in a conscious and reasoned manner. It would not be exact to say, or to maintain, that the Dogons of the Cliffs of Bandiagra had at their disposal a philosophic system of speculative thought conscious of itself; but it is not exaggerated to admit that they have a coherent cosmogony which explains, in a satisfactory manner for their consciousness, all aspects of the Universe, as has been shown by Marcel Griaule in *God of Water (Dieu de l'Eau)*. Among them, the primitive ancestor had also stolen the secret of the gods; a fault had been committed from the beginning in procreation, but this was rather a fault found among human beings, created by the gods after a certain experience, and it was immediately corrected and reabsorbed, instead of forming till the end of time the sentiment of some unknown, irrational, undeserved fault

which must be expiated throughout one's whole life.

Consequently, it is by referring to the respective cradles of the Aryans and the Meridionals, that one can understand this divergence in the contents of the human consciousness which apparently should be one, uniform. It has already been seen that, in passing from South to North, geography, climate and the conditions of existence effectively reversed the moral values, which become opposed to each other like the two poles: every defect here is a virtue there. It is by remembering the criteria of the war-like, northern morality particularly of the Aryan Germans, a morality necessitated by the conditions of life, that one can understand the slow formation, through contact with antagonistic outside influences, of a feeling of moral unease terminating in the idea of guilt among some of them, of sin among others, both specifically Northern sentiments, although collective. Nietzsche was therefore right in making criminality and sin a constitutional component of the Aryan conscience... The slight nuance which he introduces between the innermost recesses of the Aryan and Semitic consciences seems valid; but it shows that the Semites are basically Indo-Europeans, that they served as a cushion, as a buffer between the two cradles in the same way as the Slavs between the Aryan world and the Far East. In both cases there was a more or less profound upheaval of normal traits and original physiques.

Tragedy is therefore a specific creation of the Aryan consciousness which was the sole thing, perhaps in the world, to contain from the beginning the elements indispensable to its birth.

CHAPTER VI

IS THE COMPARISON BETWEEN BLACK AFRICA OF TODAY AND ANCIENT EGYPT HISTORICALLY ACCURATE?

Fustel de Coulanges showed that one of the principal causes of errors by historians consisted of spontaneously picturing the past according to the present. The foregoing comparisons between Africa and ancient Egypt will only, therefore, appear objective and scientific, in so far as it is possible to show that we have been able to avoid this tendency and we are sufficiently surrounded by guarantees. The question is, in a brief analysis, of showing that the caste system which governs African society conserves its structure and sets itself against internal upheaval, and that it allows us today to compare, on many points, the body concerning African and Egyptian facts. For the rest it has been proved, in the principal theory, that the African developments in question go back, very certainly, at least to the first millenium.

It is indispensable to insist at the outset on the specificity of the caste system. Its originality rests in the fact that the dynamic elements of society, whose discontent could have given rise to transformations, are satisfied with their social condition and do not seek to change it: a man, said to be of an inferior caste, would categorically refuse to enter a so-called higher caste if material interests alone were at stake; contrary to the proletarian who would willingly take the place of the employer. Society is divided into slaves and free men. In Senegal, the free men are the *gor*, composed of *ger* and of *nen*.

The *ger* comprise the nobility and all free men without any manual profession other than that of agriculture, which is considered as sacred.

The *nen* comprise all the artisans: cobblers, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, etc. These trades are hereditary. The *djam* (slaves) are divided into three categories: the *djam bour*, who are the slaves of

the king, the *djam negnday*, who are the slaves of the family or of the country of the mother, the *djam neg bay*, who are the slaves of the family or of the country of the father.

The *ger* form the so-called 'higher' caste. They cannot exploit, for material ends, the members of the inferior castes, without themselves losing caste in the eyes of the people; they are, on the contrary, supposed to assist them in every way; even if they are less wealthy they must deprive themselves if a man of 'lower' caste applies to them. In exchange the latter owe them moral respect.

The originality of this system arises from the fact that the manual worker instead of being cheated out of the fruit of his labour – as the artisan or serf of the Middle Ages, or to a lesser extent the modern workman – can, on the contrary, increase it, by adding to it goods given by the nobleman. Consequently, if there were to be a social revolution, it would be accomplished from above and not from below. But there is something better: the members of all the castes, including the slaves, are closely associated with authority; which leads to constitutional monarchies, governed by councils of ministers where all the authentic representatives of the people appear.

It will be understood that there has never been, in Africa, a revolution against the régime, but only against those who administered it badly, that is to say, unworthy princes.

For every caste, inconveniences and advantages, transference of rights and compensation, all balanced each other. So it is outside consciousness, in material progress, in the influences received from outside, that must be sought the 'locomotive of history'. Taking in account its isolation, it will be understood why African societies have remained relatively unaltered, to the point where we are able today to lay down many points of comparison with ancient Egypt.

The only element which would have any interest in overthrowing the order of African society, because he is alienated without any compensation, is the slave of the father's house. He has been unable to do so for reasons arising from the pre-industrial character of the society, concentration, etc. The clan system, which is also found in Africa, is a primitive stage, where the embryonic division of labour has not already taken the form of the caste system. The forms of alienation of more developed societies being absent, this system also has a tendency to become petrified.

The grammatical relationship between the African languages of today, such as Walaf, and ancient Egyptian of the eighteenth dynasty, such as is without any doubt expressed in the conjugation below, shows that the comparison of the two realities, far from being illusory, is legitimate and that it is conceivable, even in different fields.

The root *kef* = to capture, to seize violently, to tear, in modern Walaf as well as ancient Egyptian (2400 to 750 B.C.) will be chosen as our example of conjugation.

Classical Egyptian ¹		Walaf	
KEF i	I have seized	KEF nâ	I have seized
KEF ek (m)	)	KEF nga	Thou has seized
KEF et (f)	) Thou hast seized	KEF na	He has seized
KEF ef (m)	) He or she has	KEF et	) One has
KEF es (f)	) seized	KEF es	) seized
KEF nen	We have seized	KEF nen	We have seized
KEF ten	You have seized	KEF ngen	You have seized
KEF sen	They have seized	KEF nanu	They have seized

Walaf, at the present time, expresses the feminine by a different grammatical procedure from that of classical Egyptian. It consists of following the name by: male or female. Moreover this process existed in certain cases in Egyptian, but never became general.² According to Miss Homburger, it is only in African languages that the generalization was made, as a sort of extension of an evolution outlined in Egyptian during the period of decline.

It will be understood, therefore, that the feminine forms of the Egyptian conjugation disappear in Walaf where, when they are maintained, as in the third person singular, they become equivalent to the masculine forms and the whole is expressed in a form of a pleonasm. In this way light is thrown on certain grammatical facts in Walaf, which have remained obscure up till now.

More and more investigations are coming every day to confirm this profound cultural relationship between ancient Egypt and the rest of Black Africa. It is in this way that Jean Capart and Georges Contenau examine the supposed Semitic character of the Egyptian language.

To what linguistic family then is connected the language of the hieroglyphic inscriptions? After having affirmed more and more clearly in successive editions of his Egyptian grammar (1894, 1902, 1911), the relationship of the Egyptian language with the Semitic languages, the languages of East Africa and the Berber languages of North Africa, Professor Erman explains these relations with much less firmness in the last edition of his work (1928). Faced with these hesitations, it thus seems wiser, at the present time, to draw one's inspiration from the latest conclusions of Professor Erman: 'The Egyptians are Semitic Nubians.'

The latest studies of Masson-Oursel tend, purely and simply, to identify the ancient Egyptian genius with that of present day Africa, and insist on the breadth and depth of the Egyptian cultural influence on Black Africa across Nubia.

In lending itself to the Negro mentality, the intellectualism born of Socrates and Aristotle, Euclid and Archimedes adapted itself there; the Egyptologist perceives this mentality like a backcloth behind the refinements of the civilisation which he marvels at....

Led to perceive what must be a truism, the African aspect of the Egyptian mind, we can understand in this way more than one trait of its culture....

From now on, in this order of research work so valuable to the investigation of the thought, we begin to catch a glimpse of the fact that a large part of the Black Continent, instead of being as simple-minded and 'savage' as one had supposed, reflects in many directions across the vast isolation, by desert or by forest, the influences which, through Nubia, Libya and Ethiopia, came from the Nile.⁴

Thus because of the relatively static character of African society which prompted Frobenius to write that Africa is '*a tin of preserves of ancient civilisation*' it is possible today to establish a comparison with the past, surrounding ourselves, nonetheless, by the precautions necessary to remain on scientific ground.

CHAPTER VII

DISTURBING FACTS

Under this heading we are going to analyse a certain number of facts suggested by the vocabulary of the languages of the people we have studied.

ANCESTOR WORSHIP

The universal character of this has been emphasized: emphasis was laid, at the most, on the difference of forms taken by this worship when passing from the Indo-European cradle to the Meridional cradle.

Among the Indo-Europeans everything gravitated around the gens (genos): the clan of the father symbolizing the patriarchal régime, patrilineal descent; all the ideas of patrilineal consanguine relationships are contained in this term which seems typically Indo-European. This is one of those rare expressions of which it never enters one's mind to doubt the authenticity whenever an attempt is made to define the minimum of roots constituting, at the present state of our knowledge, the primitive foundation of Indo-European.

The end of the preceding chapter shows that the vocabulary of certain African languages, such as Walaf, could have dated from any ancient times. Now, there exists in Walaf a root, *geno* = the paternal waist, patrilineal descent in the strict Indo-European sense, so much so that the expression 'Sama *geno* (a)g bay!' = 'On the waist of my father!', is an oath. This root has proliferated as much in Walaf as in the Indo-European languages and, curiously enough, the sense of the proliferations is often comparable.

The parallel would be more convincing and more exhaustive if it were possible to find the same root in ancient Egyptian.

Now there exists in the hieroglyphic script a sign representing the tail of an animal, whose name is transcribed *gen*. It has not been

possible to identify the animal in question; it is not known exactly if the expression transcribed is the name of the animal, or that of the determinative: for the rest, in Egyptian the determinative has

WALAF	INDO-EUROPEAN
GEN = to go out	GEN MEN = of most noble breast
GENTE = baptism (ceremony of the coming-out of the new born child one week after birth)	(Walaf) = well born man, the noble
GEN = better person	= german, by regressive dissimilation from the noun 'generation' (Indo-European)*
GEN = male sex = animal's tail	

often a vocal value and is pronounced in the same way as the specific name. Thus confirmation of the root *gen* seems probable enough in Egyptian. The uncertainties which rule the vocabulary do not allow of our being more affirmative.

The dictionaries of the Egyptian language contain an infinite number of words of which the meaning can perhaps only be given at the moment by a very general indication: e.g., 'Verb expressing a movement, or a violent action'. Often the more definite translation is accompanied by this reservation: '*or something analogous*'... It also happens that zoological and botanical determinations come up against difficulties, of which this is an example. Certain texts from the most ancient times speak of a type of wood, used in building, which the Egyptians sought in Lebanon. The first Egyptologists translated the name 'Ash' by 'Acacia'. Victor Loret showed that it was in fact the Cilician fir which is to be found today everywhere in the Taurus. The translation which many authors had adopted: '*Cedar of Lebanon*', is therefore wrong.¹

It can also be emphasized that the Egyptians – no more than any other ancient people – had never prepared an academic dictionary and that consequently the vocabulary collected according to the texts (*The Book of the Dead, The Pyramid Texts, etc.*) is necessarily

* Samba Mamadou has confirmed the etymology of these Indo-European roots for me.

fragmentary. It therefore often happened that Egyptian expressions which have not been certified survived in related African languages; but only further systematic investigations will make this point of view sufficiently conclusive.

According to Fustel de Coulanges, patrilineal relationships are marked by worship: the sharing of the funeral meal, the performance of the same worship for the same ancestor.

The principle of consanguinity was not the material act of birth; it was worship. This is clearly seen in India. There the head of the family twice in each month, offers a funeral meal; he presents a cake to the manes of his father, another to his paternal grandfather, a third to his paternal great-grandfather, but never to those from whom he descends by women. Then, going back still further, but always in the same line, he makes an offering to the fourth, fifth and sixth generations of ancestors. Only for these, the offering is somewhat lighter: a simple drink of water and a few grains of rice. Such is the funeral meal; and it is according to the performance of these rites that consanguinity is reckoned.²

These rites are also to be found – as far as the funeral meal is concerned – among the Sereres of Senegal; but the ancestor to whom this worship is made is in the maternal line; and the practice of totemism causes him always to be represented in his 'animal form': the *Tur*, which is, most of the time, a non-poisonous snake which lives in the place reserved for the libations and moves about freely in the house.³ This is what explains that *tur* means 'libation' in Walaf and in Serere; *turu* = to offer libations. The latter are reserved, as among the Indo-Europeans, only for members of the family descended from the same ancestor: the relation of consanguinity which exists among them is called *mbok* = sharing (understood: the funeral meal)? *bok* = to share, is the corresponding verb. It is characteristic that it serves to indicate the notion of consanguinity; it reflects more its religious aspect than its biological. It is only by extension that the word can mean: to have in common; *bok nday* = to have the same mother in common.

Every family has its totemic name, that of its mythical ancestor, of its clan, of its genos, so to speak, but with a matrilineal base. For example the Guelwar Diouf have as a totem a sort of lizard, called

Mbossé: they are the only ones to have the right to make libations to this animal.

Lar = God of the hearth (Etruscan, Roman, Peul)⁴

Lar = Object of worship (Walaf)

It is not only in the field of ancestor worship that are met facts as disturbing as this because of the etymology of the words which designate them.

MEDITERRANEAN VOCABULARY

A whole vocabulary, dating from the Aegean age, that is, from a period when the Indo-European world, in view of its cultural instability, was particularly permeable to foreign influences, could be put in question.

No one perhaps as much as Victor Berard has emphasized the unilateral Egypto-Phoenician influence undergone by Greece.

It is from the sea also and its people that the Greek poet Homer received a number of foreign words, either as names of places and proper names, or as common names. One could draw up quite an ample vocabulary of these to show how it is necessary, moreover, to turn to the ideas and the theories of the Phoenicians or of their Egyptian masters to explain a number of the turns of phrase or metaphors of Homer...

To get to Egyptos or to return from there, Menelaus and the Cretan pirate had to go by way of Phoenicia. To get into the Homeric poems, the Egyptian tale (the tale of the shipwrecked man) could have taken the same route....

Our Odyssean story therefore presents a mixture of Egyptian and Semitic things, which is, properly speaking the character of Phoenician works.

I do not therefore believe in the rôle of a Ulysses Homer. I believe in the work of a literate poet knowing how to read as well as to write and borrowing from a written source the materials for his descriptions and his legends. This source came to him directly or indirectly from the Phoenicians.⁵....

Most of the other Greek islands have preserved until today the indelible memory of this period in the names that they still bear.

These names, indeed, which the Hellenes have transmitted for

thirty centuries, Delos, Syros, Casos, Paxos, Tharos, Samos, etc., mean nothing in Greek, but in ancient times they were accompanied by Greek appellations which every Hellenic ear readily understood: Ortygia 'the Island of Quails'; Aghne, 'the Island of Foam'; Plateia, 'the Flat Island'; Aeria, 'the Airy Island'. These Greek appellations, forgotten today, were only the translations of mysterious names for which a Semitic etymology can surely account: Casos-Achne, Paxos-Platei, Thasos-Aeria, Samos-Hysele, Delos-Ortygia, are so many 'doublets' as the geographers say...

In the old doublets of the Greek Mediterranean it seems that the first term is the original one, and the second is a later copy: the Semites created the first: the Hellenes substituted the second for this. For it cannot be seen when or how or why the Hellenes, if the Greek appellation had been the primitive original, would later have abandoned this expression of their own language and preferred a foreign name. The Phoenicians had ruled over the Pelasgian waters before the Achaean Hellenes; the later history of the Achaean occupation makes no further mention of their sovereignty... The Odyssey provides the decisive index on this point.⁶

Nothing is more debatable than the etymology of the expression 'barbarian', often considered as Indo-European. According to Thucydides, Homer never used it and he gives the reason for this:

...He does not even use the term barbarian, probably because the Hellenes had not yet been marked off from the rest of the world by one distinctive appellation...⁷

There is to be found in Book II of Herodotus quite a curious passage relating to the term 'barbarian': the Pharaoh Necôs undertook the cutting of a canal linking the Nile with the Red Sea but he had to stop the work...

...in consequence of an oracle which warned him 'that he was labouring for the barbarian'. The Egyptians call by the name of barbarians all such as speak a language different from their own.⁸

It could have been thought that 'barbarian' is an expression essentially Greek, and that Herodotus used it to translate an equivalent Egyptian idea. What goes before permits us to doubt this interpretation.

It must be added that the expression has not become widespread in Indo-European languages; and that its structure – the doubling of the root *bar* to form a substantive – is an essential characteristic of the African languages in contrast to the Indo-European languages.

It is curious to note that *bar* = to speak quickly (in Walaf), *barbar-lu* = to pretend to speak rapidly; examples could be multiplied to emphasize the proliferation of this root in Walaf.

Okeanus: stretch of water (in Greek): it is Homer who introduced the word into poetry, according to Herodotus (Book II), but it is not Indo-European.

Cyane = a pit filled with water (in Walaf).

Zeus is considered as the European god *par excellence*. He is identified with all the atmospheric phenomena in the heavens; he is in turn god of light, of storms and of rain, according to Albert Grenier, who emphasizes also the etymological unity of his name in different Indo-European languages.

To the Sanskrit *Dyāus* (root *div*, to shine) corresponds the Greek *Zeus*, the Latin *Jupiter*, the old Norse, *Tyr*, the Germanic, *Ziu*. Properly speaking it is the luminous sky.⁹

This point of view about the etymology of Zeus is also that of Piganiol.

Perfectly faithful to the Indo-European tradition, the Persians give the name Zeus to all heavenly beings.¹⁰

The author refers to paragraph 131 of Book I of Herodotus, where the same idea is mentioned.

It emerges, in essence, from these quotations, that Zeus is not identified with the sky, but with heavenly space, the space between heaven and earth where develop all the atmospheric phenomena and which by a rather disquieting coincidence, to say the least, is also called *Dyau* in Walaf, *Djaw* = day, in Bantu.

Obviously, it would be naïve on our part to wish to draw scientific truths from such a vague parallel between African and Indo-European expressions, especially when the antecedent evidence regarding the African languages is so rare. It can even be remembered

that, in linguistics, it is always relatively easy to compare any two languages from any part of the globe; it is the opposite which would be rather difficult: to prove that two languages have absolutely no bond of relationship.

Nonetheless it still happens that the mystery exists, since the parallel has been established, not with secondary Indo-European expressions, but with the several certain authentic expressions which have been able to be used to construct the very theory of Indo-European: *genos*, *Zeus*, etc...

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Meridional cradle, confined to the African continent in particular, is characterised by the matriarchal family, the creation of the territorial state, in contrast to the Aryan city-state, the emancipation of woman in domestic life, xenophilia, cosmopolitanism, a sort of social collectivism having as corollary a tranquillity going as far as unconcern for tomorrow, a material solidarity of right for each individual, which makes moral or material misery unknown to the present day; there are people living in poverty, but no one feels alone and no one is in distress. In the moral domain, it shows an ideal of peace, of justice, of goodness and an optimism which eliminates all notion of guilt or original sin in religious and metaphysical institutions. The types of literature most favoured are the novel, tales, fables and comedy.

The Northern cradle, confined to Greece and Rome, is characterised by the patriarchal family, by the city-state (there was between two cities, said Fustel de Coulanges, something more impassable than a mountain); it is easily seen that it is on contact with the Southern world that the Northerners broadened their conception of the state, elevating themselves to the idea of a territorial state and of an empire. The particular character of these city-states, outside of which a man was an outlaw, developed an internal patriotism, as well as xenophobia. Individualism, moral and material solitude, a disgust for existence, all the subject-matter of modern literature, which even in its philosophic aspects is none other than the expression of the tragedy of a way of life going back to the Aryans' ancestors, are all attributes of this cradle. An ideal of war, violence, crime and conquests, inherited from nomadic life, with as a consequence, a feeling of guilt and of original sin, which causes pessimistic

religious or metaphysical systems to be built, is the special attribute of this cradle.

Technical progress and modern life, the progressive emancipation of modern woman under the very influence of this individualism, so many factors make it difficult to recall the ancient condition of servitude of the Aryan woman.

The literary style *par excellence* is tragedy or drama. The African, since the agrarian myths of Egypt, never went beyond the cosmic drama.

African solidarity is not a scientific solidarity, the latter being as effective as it is bereft of human warmth. African solidarity could enrich scientific socialism with this latter factor.

The social distress of which mention has been made above arises from material insecurity and moral solitude; it is absolutely distinct from the disappointment and intellectual malaise of the modern scientist.

The scientist was untroubled during the whole of the reign of the geocentric system; that is, until the Renaissance. Then the discovery of infinity came to upset his reason and even his conscience. In his new conception of the universe in expansion, the galaxies which rotate in empty space, at distances which can only be counted in light-years, the immensity of their duration as opposed to the human phenomenon produce in him an intellectual bewilderment. He is crushed by the infinity of space and the duration of time. He is disillusioned by the peripheral position of man in the universe, by his purely accidental presence. He tends to ask, with Solomon, if all is not pure vanity.

Nevertheless things must have a meaning; the labour of the scientist must be inserted into the framework of a general activity, highly useful for civilisation and for the universe, otherwise absurdity would rule on a cosmic scale. How can one escape this fatality? Scientists assign today to the solar system a duration of life of fifteen billion years; then the sun will go out; if it has not exploded before then to destroy everything by fire which will mean death by cold. And then, perhaps, after an immeasurable lapse of time, the same cycle would take shape anew, absurdly, somewhere in space, and go through the same phases once more. The scientist must find the means of avoiding this disconcerting eventuality to which his own investigations

are leading him in his indestructable will to penetrate the unknown.

Here also, the cultural past of nations and peoples can influence the pessimistic or optimistic views, which can be adopted to give a meaning to the higher activity of the human mind, to look to the future of the species.

In his *Phénomène Humain* Father Teilhard de Chardin, in a gigantic effort of synthesis, tries to show that evolution necessarily leads towards an end; but the end in question is metaphysical and does not satisfy the scientist, concerned with the concrete and with what is tangible. But the question is so disconcerting that many Western scientists (physicists, mathematicians, biologists) arrive at a vague deism.

It can be deduced, from what has been said, that most of the future African scientists, taking into account their cultural past, will belong rather to the category which adopts a reasoned optimistic view-point.

Perhaps they will consider that once earthly humanity accomplishes itself, instead of dying of boredom in the most complete idleness, man will realise that his task has only begun. He will discover then that it is absolutely within his possibilities, well before fifteen billion years of reflection, to tame the solar system and to reign there as far as the peripheral planet Pluto, in a practically eternal manner. Will man perhaps arrive at this by nourishing the sun with unstable satellites formed of sidereal matter, which finish by falling into its mass, or perhaps by restoring to the sun the energy radiated by it, by the acceleration of hydrogen nuclei from huge artificial electromagnetic fields? To refuse a thermodynamic 'heat death', to stabilise the solar system, to protect it from dangerous meteors, to solidify the gaseous planets, to reheat those of the periphery to make them habitable, to prevent the appearance and proliferation of biological monsters, to control the climates and the evolution of the planets, to discover and maintain all the practicable routes in the system, to communicate with the nearest stars in the galaxy, perhaps to create a superman with a longer life, such perhaps will be the enthusiastic preoccupations of the scientist of tomorrow. Life would thus in its own way have triumphed over death, man would have made an earthly paradise which would be almost eternal, and at the same time would have triumphed over all the pessimistic philosophical

and metaphysical systems, all the apocalyptic visions of the destiny of the species. A grandiose stage in the evolution of the human consciousness would have been passed over. Man would appear as a god of 'Becoming' in the Hegelian sense of the word.

The universe of tomorrow will in all probability be imbued with African optimism.

APPENDIX

NOTES ON 'THE RESURRECTION OF HOMER. THE HEROIC AGE' BY VICTOR BÉRARD

Rarely has an historian insisted on the Egyptian influence on Greece to the same extent as Victor Bérard.

He underlines first of all the frequency of inter-relationships as long ago as the Homeric age, the gilded luxury in which the Achaean world lived – Helen already received precious gifts from the inhabitants '*of Thebes in Egypt, the city where the houses overflow with riches*'.

Egypt was already famed for its doctors who were the most knowledgeable in the world.

This same Helen was able freely to obtain in Thebes, the famous neponthes, anaesthetic and narcotic combined, with which she deadened the pain or the anxieties of her guests.¹

According to the author, the objects found in Crete suggest that relations with Egypt go back into a limitless antiquity: a vase found at Knossos 'can be ascribed to a model which was only to be found on the Nile in pre-dynastic times or during the first and second dynasties'.

The Island itself is even said to have been annexed by the Pharaohs:

It seems that thirteen centuries before the Ptolemies, who were to perform the same task, twenty-two centuries before the Calphs, who were to repeat it, thirty-two centuries before Mehemet Ali, who undertook it and succeeded for a short time, *the pharaohs annexed the Isle of Crete to their empire*: their vassals and tributaries in Phoenicia were their political agents and their commercial representatives.²

The seals of Amonophis III and of his queen Tii, found in the Mediterranean, allow us to mark the date of the beginning of Greek history with certainty.

The history of the Greek countries begins in these XVIth to XVth centuries before our era: the Aegaeon and Mycenaean monuments can consequently be enfram'd from that time in a chronology to which documents from Egypt and Greece themselves refer. The seals of Amenophis III and his queen Tii (1411-1380 B.C.), found in Cyprus, Rhodes, Crete and Mycena, furnish the first certain date for the full advancement of this Aegaeo-Levantine civilisation, whose contribution the Hellenes ascribed to Minos, the son of Europa the Phoenician woman, to Cadmus the Tyrian and Danaüs the Egyptian, who imported written laws, the alphabet, the horse, the war chariot and the galley of fifty oars.³

The Achaeans began to study in the school of the Egypto-Phoenicians, learned from them to construct the fast Homeric vessels with a crew of fifty-two men 'which composed the fleets of Tyre and Sidon and of which the Egyptian monuments of the XVth century B.C., have preserved for us the likeness: all the details of their construction and of their rigging correspond with those of the Homeric cruiser, and with the fifty-oared galleys which the Levantines, and later the Westerners, obtained from the Phoenicians and which the whole of the Mediterranean of the classic age, of the Middle Ages and of modern times adopted for a period of three thousand years, and of which two latest examples still appeared in the squadrons of our Louis XV.'⁴

The heavy wagon with its wooden wheels which was the nomad's house, was transformed on contact with the Egyptians into a light metal chariot used by the Achaeans 'similar in every point to the chariots of the Pharaoh, described by Maspero'.

The author quotes a passage in which Maspero describes the chariots of the Egyptian cavalry and asks the following question:

Is it of Homeric warriors or of Egyptian warriors that G. Maspero speaks in this way? And would not such a Homeric verse as 'Great-hearted horses flying towards the plain', be the most literal translation of such an Egyptian representation of a chariot in full

career, in which the horses with long manes and tails (according to the Homeric adjective) are flying, with both their forefeet beating the air?⁶

The ties with Egypt and the Near East were so profound that the author supposes that Agamemnon, the leader of Achaean feudality, the symbol of the formation of the Greek people, was not of pure Achaean blood, nor even of Hellenic culture or race, for he was the son of Atreus and the grandson of Pelops the Phrygian, who settled in Argos following his marriage to an Achaean princess. He owed his renown to his fortune. His sovereignty extended over the peninsula which became the Peloponnesus.

Egyptians, Phoenicians and Hittites were therefore, the educators of Achaea, but especially the Egyptians and Phoenicians.⁷

The author shows that the heroes of the Homeric age conserve close relations with Thebes in Egypt, since Menelaus exiled himself there for seven years and returned laden with gifts. Thebes was full of foreigners: Semites, Libyans and Achaeans, as Byzantium was to be later at the time of the Byzantine Empire.

It was even reduced to defending its territory, its past and even its language, against these foreigners who presented themselves as friends, allies or servants, and who infiltrated it peacefully... It remained the most celebrated and richest city in the world; this city of gold still attracted the attention and the covetousness of the Achaeans...

How many are the Achaean nobles who must, before and after Menelaus, have gone there and spent long months and long years, in this capital of civilisation?⁸

In fact it was the whole of Egypt which received an increasingly important flood of foreigners of the Achaean race. Every time the Pharaoh conquered the 'peoples of the sea', 'he spared the survivors, enrolled them and distributed them throughout his construction yards or in his military outposts. They became the best workers and the best soldiers of the king...

...Domiciled or quartered in barracks in Thebes and in the

Provinces, these mercenaries married Egyptian women, mixed with the population, became respectable people and even important personages, attaining honours and riches. Under the XXth dynasty (1200-1100 B.C.) in Thebes itself a good part of the officers and officials were Syrians and Berbers of recent adaptation....

This exchange, of women especially, effected a mixing of races and of civilisations, of which the tales of Eumaeus give us a good example.

In Ithaca, the hero, Aigyptos the Egyptian, was always listened to with attention when he rose to speak to the people.⁹

The Author detects in the Mediterranean toponymy the breadth of Egypto-Phoenician influence.

Two or three thousand years of almost continuous intimacy between the islands of the Très Verte and the Levantine civilisation had the direct and indirect influence which can be imagined on the daily life of the Achaeans: Rome did not react more strongly and more deeply on our Western Europe...

...The art of this time, even in its most native form, was oriental, with the character implied by this word; the love of decoration and of display, of brilliance and of richness and even of flashiness, fantasy and exuberance in the combination of skilful lines and precious materials; the sentiments of universal life, of animal and vegetable grace as much as human beauty; a sensual ardour towards movement and joy, and a sort of dreamy languor and resignation in pleasure; in sum, one knows not what exoticism, in comparison with our Europe.¹⁰

But, at this distant time, the Phoenicians, who served as a link with Egypt, were without any possible doubt the vassals of the pharaoh: the author sees the proof of this in the correspondence exchanged by them.

The kings or suffetes of Tyre, Sidon, Arad and of Byblos, the most noble Phoenician metropolitan centres, figured among these correspondents who call themselves the servants of Amenophis, the dogs of his house, his footstools and the dust under his feet.¹¹

Victor Bérard went as far as an analysis of the work of Homer.

To him the interdependence between the *Odyssey* and the Egyptian maritime romances transmitted on papyrus is close. Several passages of the *Odyssey* are only to some degree fragments of Egyptian prose put into Greek verse.

For a long time, the Egyptian sea voyages in the Mediterranean or in the Red Sea and their long and complicated journeys gave birth to maritime stories or novels, of which the papyri have still only surrendered two... *The second story, which is the more romantic, is this tale of the shipwrecked man to which I have already alluded: he is the first in line of the Robinson Crusoes.* It takes the reader back to the distant times when the Pepis and the Mentou Heteps of the sixth to the eleventh dynasties (2400-2100 B.C.) were already sending their fleets from Pouanit to the south of the Red Sea, to buy perfumes, drugs and rare animals: Salomon and Hiram united to send their larger vessels from Tarsis, to take part in the same commerce in the same spot. The Egyptian Robinson is the victim of a shipwreck in far-off waters, which border on To-Noutri, land of the gods (Ulysses quotes words borrowed from the language of the gods). A tempest sinks the boat and all the crew, and our hero is cast alone on an island, inhabited by a gigantic serpent with a human voice (like Circe and Calypso): this serpent, a good family man, welcomes the shipwrecked mariner, supports him, feeds him, foretells for him a happy return and overloads him with presents when putting him on board the ship which was to take him back home. (Circe acted in the same way.)¹²

Proteus, the heavenly sorcerer, who was met by Menelaus at the mouth of the Nile, and all the history concerning him in which Idothee was involved, find their equivalent in Egyptian literature: Prouti is the name of an Egyptian pharaoh, a legendary magician.

On the papyri of the thirteenth century B.C. we can find the story told of two sorcerer princes: they are sons of Prouti and future Proutis themselves. They are seeking the book of Thot, the book of magic *par excellence*, which allows those who possess it to place themselves immediately beneath the gods; by its formulas, it allows one to cast spells on the sky, the earth, the night, the mountains and the waters; to know the birds and the reptiles, the fish which are at the bottom of the sea, for a divine force makes them rise to the surface.

The Odyssean Proteus knows the unfathomable depths of the whole sea and makes the seals rise from the foaming depths.¹³

When, after all his metamorphoses, the Odyssean Proteus regained his human form, he no longer had 'the august white head of hair and silver beard of the Eternal Father, as he would popularly be imagined to have today. He wore a black wig bristling in the wind, as is suited to Proteus the Egyptian. For the true Prouti never goes out without a blue or black wig.'¹⁴

The pharaoh of Egypt wore a light wig, not of hair or of manes, but of metal and especially of enamel. It was therefore a true coiffure and not an imitation of a head of hair. Such wigs still exist in North Africa and in Abyssinia. The Egyptian nobility wore wigs of lapis lazuli.

The Odyssean pharaoh ruled over the seas 'as the pharaohs of the fables and the Egyptian caricatures ruled over the rats, the lions or the cats....

The story of King Khoufoui and the Magicians featured a certain Didi who, thanks to the books of Thot, was followed by lions across the country, as our Proteus was followed by seals.'¹⁵

Finally the predictions of the great bearded serpent in the Egyptian tale of the shipwrecked mariner are the same as those made by the divine Tiresias to Ulysses.

The author shows that the zephyr is only in Egypt a beneficent wind worthy of being sung in verse; granted its baneful character in Greece and the northern Mediterranean in general, 'only by borrowing from the manners and the literature of Egypt could the mistral have been made the supreme pleasure of a Hellenic paradise. To think, however, that after twenty-five centuries, the disagreeable zephyr (so speaks the Odyssean poet wisely) has become in all the western literatures which are disciples of Greece, the breeze of tender signs, of tranquil happiness and of love!'¹⁶

Proteus in his transformations changes himself in turn into a lion with a mane, a panther, a giant boar, etc... Or it is the hippopotamus, which the Egyptians called the river pig. This was the god of childbirth. It is found in Greece only on the Minoan monuments of Egyptian origin. Its presence, writes Bérard, is the indisputable proof to archeologists of the Egyptian influence in pre-Hellenic Crete,

the cults of which were transmitted to the Hellenised Cretans. The author, in conclusion, asks the following question: 'On the whole, can it be denied that the Odyssean poet borrowed the episode of Proteus from the tales and romances of pharaonic Egypt? But was this a direct loan, from the Egyptian text to the Greek text?'¹⁷

He thinks not: the Phoenicians, agents and vassals of the Egyptians, might have served as intermediaries. But to him, the Egypto-Phoenicians played the same civilising rôle towards Greece and the Hebrews, if not more so, as did Greco-Latin antiquity towards the modern West.

The error of our predecessors was only in believing that the dawn of modern times was also the awakening of creative and thinking humanity, and that Homer and the Bible were the first sudden explosions of literary genius. The recent discoveries of the archaeologists in Egypt and Chaldea have fully revealed to us that during a long Levantine antiquity, scholars, artists and poets had already created masterpieces, which were also to serve as models for a hundred generations and of which Hebrews and Hellenes, far from being ignorant of these, were the admirers and imitators and sometimes even the copyists. Chaldea, Egypt and Phoenicia, Babylon, Thebes and Siron were to the Hebrews and the Hellenes the same holy, beautiful, learned and venerable antiquity as Jerusalem, Athens and Rome were for Westerners.¹⁸

The Egyptian priests did not put their names to their discoveries, as did the individualistic Greeks, and no inventor's name has survived. On the contrary, they kept them jealously within the bosom of their caste and only dispensed an exoteric elementary teaching to the people.

They invented the notion of initiation, which was the great weakness which was to destroy their civilisation one day. They liked to give to knowledge a revelatory character, and attributed their discoveries and the results of their experiments to the god Thot (Mercury, Hermes). It was thus very easy for the disciples they had initiated to attribute to themselves the discoveries of their masters. We know today in an almost certain fashion that Thales of Miletus, Pythagoras of Samos, Archimedes of Sicily, Plato, Solon, etc. had been pupils of the Egyptian priests, who at this period, even according to Plato,

considered the Greeks as relatively childish minds. Now it is remarkable that none of the Greek scholars educated in this way in Egypt – Pythagoras, the founder of the school of Greek mathematics in particular – ever thought of separating his own discoveries and those received from Egypt. This is all the more inexplicable since Plutarch in *Isis and Osiris* dwells on the fact that among all the Greek scholars initiated in Egypt, Pythagoras was the best liked by the Egyptians, because of his mystical mind. It is known that his science of numbers was for a long time a mathematico-mystical science.

Such a taste for the individual reputation of the immortality of the name, such a lack of intellectual honesty, did not fail to anger the honest Herodotus, who showed, without beating about the bush, that Pythagoras was a plagiarist.*

Herodotus, whose birth was separated by scarcely 16 years (?) from the condemnation to death of Pythagoras, does not speak of the latter as a mythical person, but as a being who really existed. This does not prevent certain people from thinking that Pythagoras was only the personification of the new philosophico-mathematical tendency (school).

The existence of Pythagoras can be doubted; but this is not the case with that of Archimedes. His tomb has been found at Syracuse in Sicily. Now all the mechanical inventions attributed to Archimedes present a doubtful character; they existed in Egypt thousands of years before the birth of Archimedes. The builders of the pyramids of the ancient empire knew the principle of the lever; they employed the latter, in a variety of ways, to hoist tons of rock to the tops of the pyramids under construction. Now it is impossible to use such an instrument without immediately recognising the relationship between mass and distance without theorising.

Archimedes is said to have discovered the endless screw, which is at the origin of enormous mechanical progress. But Diodorus Siculus is quite definite: Archimedes could only have made this invention after his voyage to Egypt, where the hydraulic screw was already in use and served to pump water. This appears so obvious that it is readily accepted today that Archimedes had at the most adapted an Egyptian invention. The Egyptian screw exported in this way by

* *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 82

Archimedes, served, as in its country of origin, to 'pump water' from the silver mines of Spain. Finally, even the Principle of Archimedes deals with this mechanics of fluids. There are, therefore, grounds for pursuing the investigations. The outcome would seem to be obvious.

Another fact, which is no less paradoxical, is to be noted. The Hellenic intellectual genius came to light and was developed principally outside Athens, and continental Greece, in Asia Minor (Bergam, Miletus, Halicarnassus), Palestine (Antioch) and in Egypt at Alexandria.

This remained true during and after the reign of Alexander. To grasp the anomaly, it would serve as an example if one were to suppose that Dakar was today the permanent centre of the creative power of France at the height of her glory.

It was in Alexandria that philosophy was to know a new advance with the neo-Platonism of Plotinus.

The most important library in the world at that time (which was later to be burnt by fanatical Christians), the most eminent doctors practising dissection, engineers building 'modern machines' (thaumaturgists): flying pigeon in wood, steam reaction turbine, 'Hero's sphere', etc., all were found in Alexandria and not in Athens. Why? There is no apparent reason, if it is not that the substructure and the Egyptian intellectual tradition which had already lasted thousands of years offered to scientists conditions of work with which neither the Europe nor Asia of that time could compete. Nothing gives such an idea of the inequality of the foreign contributions to Greece as this permanent choice and the development of the Alexandrian science compared with those in other centres of Asia and Europe, to those who would like to weight Africa and Asia equally in this respect.

Thanks to the ingenuity of Alexandrian scientists the technical progress realised in ancient times allowed the direct passage to an industrial phase by the systematic utilisation of the machine.

Hydraulic energy was put into service by 'Demeter'. The motive power of steam was virtually his discovery as well.

But no scientist found it necessary to lighten the afflictions of the slave workers (they were so cheap), by substituting the machine for their servile labour.

The slaves, for whom this problem might have been of interest, were not in a position to carry out research or to apply it. Also, the scientific results served to entertain the ruling classes, who even feared the brutal transformation which would be the consequence of the introduction of the machine into the technical habits.

Aristotle said, but ironically: 'When the shuttle works by itself, the slave will no longer be necessary'.

This is true: slavery would have been finished.

But the idea could not enter his head of devoting his researches to making the shuttle work by itself, in order to make all men free. *He wished to show, by what he said, that slavery was a natural necessity.*

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10. This was the methodology I used in *Male Daughters...* In this book, I have also suggested questions for research on African women.

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- 31 *Ibid.*, p.76.
- 32 *Ibid.*, pp.92-93.
- 33 *Ibid.*, pp.98, 100, 158-160.
- 34 Herodotus, *op. cit.*, Book II, par. 42.
- 35 *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.
- 36 Grenier, *op. cit.*, p.204.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p.204.
- 38 Herodotus, *op. cit.*, Book II, par. 48.

CHAPTER VI

- 1 Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar* (London, 1927).
- 2 Louise Homburger, *Les Langues Nègro-Africaines et les Peuples qui les parlent* (Payot, 1947), ch. XII.
- 3 Jean Capart and Georges Contenau, *Histoire de l'Orient Ancien* (Paris, 1936), p.52.
- 4 Masson-Ooursel, *La Philosophie et l'Orient* (Paris, 1948), p.43.
- 5 Leo Frobenius, *Histoire de la Civilisation Africaine* (Paris, 1933).

CHAPTER VII

- 1 Capart, *op. cit.*, p.45.
- 2 Fustel de Coulanges, *op. cit.*, p.59.

- 3 As among the Romans, according to Grenier, *op.cit.*
- 4 Hampaté Ba, Culture Peul, "Présence Africaine", June 1956, p.85.
- 5 Victor Berard, *La Résurrection d'Homère - Au temps des Héros* (Paris, Grasset, 1930), pp. 99, 102, 145, 153.
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp.52, 53, 54.
- 7 Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, *op. cit.*, p.5.
- 8 Herodotus, *op. cit.*, Book II, par. 58.
- 9 Albert Grenier, *Les Religions étrusque et romaine* (Paris, 1948), p.88.
- 10 Piganiol, *Les Origines de Rome* (Fontemoing et Cie, 1916), p.117.

APPENDIX

- 1 Victor Berard, *La Résurrection d'Homère. Au temps des Héros*, *op. cit.*, pp.34 et 35.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p.36.
- 3 *Ibid.*, pp.36, 37.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p.38.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p.40.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p.43.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p.44.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp.47, 48.
- 10 *Ibid.*, pp.61, 62.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p.72.
- 12 *Ibid.*, pp.107-109.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p.90.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p.50.
- 15 *Ibid.*, pp.91,92.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p.96.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p.97.
- 18 *Ibid.*, pp.81, 82.

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